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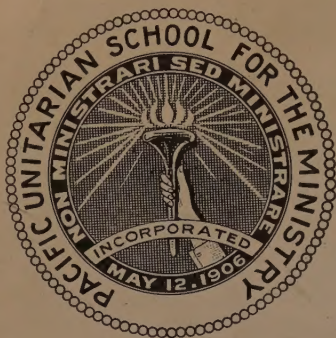
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REV. T. B. FORBUSH, Detroit:

MY DEAR PASTOR—I was particularly interested in the recent lectures delivered by you in our church, on the *Traditional and Legendary Life of Jesus of Nazareth*. Circumstances prevented me from hearing all of them, and I would be exceedingly obliged if you would kindly furnish me manuscript copies of the entire series, and if there are no objections I may have some copies of the same printed for distribution to friends, who, I know, would appreciate the favor.

Very sincerely,

S. D. ELWOOD.

DETROIT, April, 1881.

S. D. ELWOOD, Esq.:

MY DEAR FRIEND—It gives me pleasure to comply with your request for manuscript copies of the lectures on the Life of Jesus. I have taken the liberty of adding a few notes of reference, and, since life is short and sermons are many, of cutting off introductions and appendices. But no change has been made in the spoken words save in the interest of brevity.

Cordially yours,

T. B. FORBUSH.

DETROIT, May 1, 1881.

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JESUS OF NAZARETH.

THE REAL JESUS AND THE IDEAL CHRIST.

A truly great man grows ever greater down the ages. He is like a mountain peak whose shadow falls wider and farther as the sun sinks behind it. There is a more discriminating appreciation, an acknowledgment perhaps of limitations, a separating of the accidental from the real; but true greatness never becomes less. Though we may discover flaws in his philosophy, Plato grows grander as he grows old. Shakespeare has an enthusiastic regard, almost a reverence, to-day, which he was far from winning as Queen Elizabeth's playwright. Washington, loved and respected while living, now wears the aureola of sainthood. The rugged features of Lincoln begin to shine beneath the red crown of martyrdom with a divine radiance. Were this a rude age and we a barbarous people, a few generations would transform our heroes into demigods.

We not only forget the imperfections and better understand the virtues of our great ones, but we steadily idealize them. The farther they recede from us the brighter grows the halo about them and the more grandly do their figures loom in the purple distance. The ideal is not the reproduction of the real; it is not history with the dark shades left out; it is imagination weaving the garments of fancy around an historic figure, giving to the historic face features of its own tracing. And oftentimes the ideal may be truer to the best of the individual, truer to his highest principles and noblest purposes, truer to his hopes and aspirations, than the actual life which he lived. Every noble man has a conception of manhood grander than his reality towards which he looks, but which he never attains. Posterity takes up that conception, clothes him with it, gives credit to his strivings and visions, and thus does better justice to his real aspirations than he ever did to himself. It forgets the errors but remembers the large purposes only half accomplished and the noble dreams which were unrealized. But while each age idealizes the hero of a former time, no two ages view him from exactly the same standpoint or in exactly the same light. Each sees in him what it is best fitted to see. Each paints its own picture, projecting its outline and selecting its colors out of its own character and tendencies. The historic person does not change, save as his real greatness grows with acquaintance, but the ideal floating in the world's mind takes on new form and tint with each succeeding generation.

The application of these ideas to ordinary historic persons is easy. Few, however, like to apply them to Jesus. But why not? Jesus also is an historic person. He comes to us in the line of history. What is known of him is known through history. Whatever his peculiarity of nature or of power, it is generally conceded that he lived an historic life, a simple peasant life in Galilee; that he taught the people religion in such a way as to

offend the ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem, who caused him to be put to death. After his death this universal process of historic idealization began, which, continuing through the centuries, at last elevated the Galilean teacher into the equal of the eternal and infinite God. Here was true apotheosis—the historic man scales the arch of heaven and becomes supreme Deity. Let us trace some steps of this process.

There lived in Galilee the man Jesus. He was a man of humble life and of pure heart, who had very clear sight of religious truth, and felt a very near presence of God. This man, not a priest but a peasant, tried to reform the religion of his countrymen. He taught love to God and good will to man as the substance of religion, not reverencing the forms and ceremonies of the established church. He taught this not only in the synagogue on the Sabbath, but of a week-day in a house, or a boat, along the street, on a hill-top, anywhere where there were people to hear. Tradition also says that he performed marvels. After teaching thus a little while he is apprehended for alleged breach of ecclesiastical law and put to death. Rumors arise afterwards of a resurrection. Such is the glimpse we get of the historic life of Jesus in his so-called biographies. But even these first, brief biographies are not literal histories so much as they are ideals of him which grew in the hearts of his friends after a lifetime of loving reverence. They are pictures sketched, partly perhaps from memory, by tender and worshipful hands, of that grand soul which so quickly departed. They only approximate accurate representations of actual life. Already in the misty air of tradition his form dilates to angelic stature and around his head is a halo of supernal glory.

There are four different ideals of Jesus presented in the New Testament. The first is presented in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, which with minor differences contain the same general representation. The second is the conception of Paul as

developed in his letters. The third is symbolic idea of the book of Revelations, and lastly, both in point of time and order of development, is the view of his life, nature, and work contained in the fourth gospel. Each of these descriptions differs in notable respects from the rest. All of them are portraits more or less idealized of the man of Nazareth. They depict him with all the nobility and grandeur possible to the mind of the artist. None of them are photographs. They have an historic basis, but they are elaborated and illuminated by loving memories and reverent imaginations.

The first ideal Christ, that of the Jewish disciples as embodied in the first three gospels, is a Messianic one. The Jews were looking for a Messiah, for a great deliverer, who should come in mystic power and splendor and restore the kingdom to Israel. This belief just prior to the birth of Jesus took a very definite and positive shape. There were prophecies which regulated his coming, signs by which he was to be manifest, and tasks which he was to accomplish. Jesus appeared, but neither in his advent, in his life, in his teachings or in his death did he conform to the requisite conditions or fulfil the ancient predictions. Yet within a half century after his death the Jewish Christians had applied those predictions to him, had centered the expectation around him, had misquoted and misconstrued their sacred prophecies to prove that he was the long-awaited Messiah. Certain Messianic ideas existed in the Hebrew mind. The very air of Judea was saturated with them. Jesus did not fulfill those ideas; but after his death the ideas, modified by his disciples, precipitated themselves upon and crystallized around him. The disciples thought he was the long-expected one, so they grouped about him many of their preconceived notions and tried to prove that he fulfilled all the so-called Messianic prophecies. The gospel of Matthew especially exhibits this tendency. It is full of quotations from the Old Testament wrenched from their true meaning and misap-

plied to Jesus. It clothes the historic Jesus in the Messianic garments — is the Jewish Christian's idea of what the Christ ought to have been.

In Paul's letters we have little of the historic, little of the Messianic, but instead a grand, theological Christ. Paul cares little about the earthly life of the man Jesus, perhaps knows little about it. He contemplates him not as the Galilean teacher but as the great head of the church, the first-born of every creature, the revealer and chief of a new dispensation, the appointed mediator between God and man, who was once a little while on earth but who is now dwelling in everlasting glory, waiting the appointed time to return and set up his new kingdom. With Paul this theological view of Christ as the head of a new creation, as king over all potentates and principalities and powers, the only begotten son of God at the right hand of the Father, entirely eclipsed any possible human life in Galilee. The man Jesus is transformed into a mighty celestial being who is soon to descend from heaven with the shout of the archangel and the trump of God and commence his earthly reign. Such was Paul's ideal Lord Christ.

In the Apocalypse we have the symbolic sacrificial Christ. He is the Lamb that was slain, standing on Mt. Zion. There is no reference to any earthly life. Everything is figurative and typical. He is the Lamb of God, whose blood shed in sacrifice has washed white the souls of the saints, who overcomes the great scarlet beast, and whose bride is the New Jerusalem. This is another ideal, weird, mystic, symbolic, far enough removed from the historic Galilean teacher.

In the fourth Gospel we have the philosophic, the theosophic ideal. The Palestinian tradition is moulded by Alexandrian speculation. The doctrine of the Logos, or wisdom of God, pre-existing from eternity, not as a quality of the Infinite Intelligence but as an actual spiritual being, has taken possession of the

writer. He declares that Jesus was this Logos made flesh ; that in the Hebrew peasant was incarnate the mighty, spiritual existence or æon which Jewish Philo had evolved from Plato's abstract idealism, and by this lofty assumption he laid the foundation for that union between Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy from which sprang the hybrid Christianity which has so long dominated the world. It is an ideal born of mingled theosophy and tradition. It is Christ the Logos, "the word made flesh," "which was with God and was God."

We might follow this idealizing process farther and learn how the incarnate Logos grew into the coexistent, eternally-proceeding Son, by whom the world and the heavens and all their hosts were created ; how he was declared to be very God of very God, infinite and self-existent ; how, at last, to many millions of minds, the eternal Father disappeared in a "dim and shadowy effluence," the man Jesus was placed upon the throne of the universe and became the only God they looked to, prayed to, or "knew anything about." But it is needless. History abundantly records the result of that idealization at some of the first steps of which we have hastily glanced.

Is it possible to correct the exaggerations of the ages and to draw a portrait the features of which shall approach nearer to historic accuracy ? Doubtless it may be ; still the sketch will be ideal ; no insight or inspiration can secure literal exactness. It will be the picture *we* paint of the great teacher on a broken, historic surface. We can only retouch and make vivid the blurred and indistinct outline of the ancient time. But our ideal need not, therefore, be less true than that of the fathers. We have all the materials which they have preserved. We have clearer historic judgment to sift those materials. We have a loftier idea of God, a larger view of the universe and of the relation of this world thereto, a truer appreciation of humanity and a better knowledge of the real method of Providence in the education or

mankind. We have the experience of eighteen centuries to show us what were the vital truths of Jesus' teaching, and what were the grand qualities which raised his humanity so high that it caught the glow of divinity. We can form a more correct idea of Jesus' life to-day, one more in harmony with the Infinite method of human development and inspiration, than was possible to his contemporaries with their minds preoccupied with Messianic dreams and visions of a redeemed Jerusalem with all nations flocking thereto. Paul's conception of the sudden coming of Christ in the air to reign with his saints, fades into dimness beside the reality, so patent to our eyes, of a religion which, though it has been an elevating and redeeming force for centuries, has hardly begun its glorious work of bringing man into harmony with God's eternal law, and inspiring him with the celestial spirit of truth and love. The experience of the ages is giving us the necessary perspective by which to rightly estimate Jesus. It enables us to discern his true grandeur, the things in him which are eternal and abiding, the real sources of his power and influence. As what is scenic and false drops off we gain clearer sight of the grand manhood beneath. We would not change our knowledge of what the religion of Jesus has done and is doing in the world, and our hope for the future growing out of that knowledge, for any narrow Messianic dream, for any slain Lamb putting the bloody mark on the foreheads of his elect, or even for Paul's vision of the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. We can see more clearly, we know better than they the true divinity of Jesus' soul, the true grandeur of his mission. We have a wider knowledge and are free from the prepossessions which led them astray.

And to-day the ideal Christ is the true Christ. It is the ideal which the world looks to and loves. In him humanity incarnates its own highest aspirations. It ascribes to him the divinity which it feels struggling within. And of all the ideals the simplest, the

grandest, the most human is the truest. The vision of the son of man now possible, vision springing from our larger thought of God, our wider experience of life, our deeper faith in humanity, is the best insight the world has ever had into the soul of him who for so many centuries has been its spiritual leader.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS.

In his magnificent panygeric on Toussaint L'Ouverture Wendell Phillips says: "We read history with our prejudices instead of our eyes." The phrase is terse and striking, as becomes the brilliant orator, but it does not state the entire fact. Too often we read history with other people's prejudices, not having the privilege or originality of using our own. The statements which we call "facts of history" are representations of events as they appeared to one who may have had a strong bias, or may have been under the influence of some theory which he wished to prove. Before we can read the story with our own prejudices, we must disentangle it from the prejudices of the one who tells it. The more remote the events, the more difficult it becomes to "read with our eyes." For then our historian himself has received his statements at second hand; received them, perhaps, from writers who took small pains to verify them, who cared little for their verification, and who were equally ready to repeat fact or fiction provided it helped on their cause or glorified their hero. In this way much early, ecclesiastical history has been constructed. Modern writers have accepted as truth the casual remark of some early historian, although that historian may have been some passionate controversialist who did not sift his statements, or very credulous, or a party to pious frauds to convert unbelievers and edify the saints. Histories based upon such unsound authorities have little value, however brilliant the name of the modern compiler. It is said that one may repeat a fiction so often as to begin to believe it; but even eighteen hundred years of assertion and reassertion cannot change mistake into fact or myth into

reality. As the popular lives of Jesus partake largely of this unsubstantial character, are what somebody thought might have been true, or wished were true, an attempt to state what is actually known about him, and the real reasons for accepting him as a historic character may not be wholly worthless.

History seems to know very little about Jesus. He has left no image of himself on its pages. Outside the New Testament there is but the slightest historic reference to him for a century after his death. Flavius Josephus was born in the year 37 A. D., and wrote extensively both upon Jewish antiquities and upon current events. In his antiquities Jesus is twice mentioned. The first passage (Ant. B. xviii. chap. iii. sec. 3.) is undoubtedly an addition by a later hand. Dr. Lardner suggests Eusebius as the author.¹ The second reference (Ant. B. xx. chap. ix.) is in the description of the death of James, who is spoken of as "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ." The genuineness of these words has also been doubted, but the probability is in its favor. Three Roman writers directly or indirectly refer to Jesus: Tacitus, who in the last decade of the first century mentions his death as criminal at the hands of Pilate;² Suetonius, who about the same date describes him as a seditious Roman Jew living in the time of the Emperor Claudius;³ and Pliny the younger, who in the year 104 A. D. writes an interesting letter about the Christians who were becoming numerous in his province of Bythnia, which letter, however, contains no reference to Jesus' life.⁴ This is all history knows about Jesus. There are two brief references in Josephus, the most important certainly spurious, the other not absolutely genuine; a mere mention of his death by Tacitus; a false statement concerning his character and the date of his life by Suetonius; all written during the last quarter of the

¹ Lardner's Works, Vol. iv. p. 6.

² Annals, B. XV, Cap. 44.

³ Chadwick's Bible of To-day, p. 264.

⁴ Epistles, Book X, Ep. 97; see Mosheim Com. Vol. 1, pp. 186, 276.

first, or first quarter of the second, century. We are sometimes told that in its advent Christianity was a mighty manifestation of the power of God, astonishing an awe-struck world. Let us not deny what has been emphatically repeated by such reverend authority for so many centuries. But how marvellous that the world should have forgotten to record its astonishment; that those who were so eager to make note of every other wonder should have overlooked this most prodigious of events!

But if we can obtain no historic account, hardly an historic mention of Jesus outside the New Testament, what do we find within it that has absolute historic value? Amid the many dim and doubtful figures which crowd its pages, there is one which stands out clear and distinct. Paul of Tarsus, the first great Christian missionary, is an historic personage. We may not have the accurate detail of his life, but there is no more doubt about the main features of it than there is about the main features of the life of Alexander. We have letters of his written between the years 50 and 60 A. D., which are as genuine and authentic as the letters of Cicero. All the letters ascribed to Paul in the New Testament are not his, but the most important of them stand every test of historic criticism. They are the earliest of our Christian literature, and they afford our most minute and reliable information concerning the ideas and practices of the infant churches in the middle of the first century. What Paul tells us about Jesus will be most valuable. But he tells us practically nothing. There is not a word in his letters which intimates that he ever saw the living Jesus, was familiar with the story of his career or was acquainted with any memoirs of him. He mentions a single event of his life, the last supper with his friends,¹ and he refers frequently to the fact and manner of his death.² But about the man Jesus, who he was, where he lived, what were his

¹ I Cor., XI, 23-26.

² I Cor., I, 23; II, 2, 8, etc.

circumstances and surroundings, or the ideas for teaching which he suffered death, Paul tells us nothing. Perhaps in his scheme of thought this was unimportant. His mind is filled with ideas of the anointed of God, the first born of every creature, supreme over all principalities and powers, by whom all things were created, who came into the world, not to influence it by his life and word, but to redeem it by his death. What the circumstances of his brief, earthly career might be was of small moment compared with the mighty train of events of which his death was the commencement. The heaven-descended Spirit, working out large plans of salvation in the heavens above and in the underworld beneath, revealing immortality, and coming again in power and great glory, is so idealized that any human life or human relation drops out of sight. His thought is sometimes projected so entirely into the spiritual realm that one would as almost soon expect a memoir of Plato's Divine Wisdom as of Paul's Lord Christ.

Paul's letters are the only writings of the New Testament the authorship of which is certainly known. They are the nucleus of the Christian Scripture. There are certain letters ascribed to Peter, James and John the authenticity of which is doubtful. From their contents it has been judged by some reputable scholars that they must have been written later than the deaths of their reputed authors. Hence they cannot be relied upon as historic evidence. But even if it were otherwise they would be of no value in this inquiry since they do not touch the subject. The epistles of John and James do not mention the life of Jesus in any way, that of Peter speaks only of his sufferings "on the tree."¹ The whole mass of epistolary writings is wonderfully barren of historic reference to Jesus. Neither his deeds nor his teachings are used to persuade, convince or inspire men. The great silence about his life seems to proceed partly from ignorance of the writers concerning him, and partly from their theological idea of him as a mighty

¹ I Peter, II, 24.

heaven-descended being whose earthly life and teaching were of little moment compared with the spiritual effects which would flow from his death. The ideal drove the real wholly out of sight.

But here are the four gospels, purporting to have been written by Jesus' apostles or their friends, giving us in some detail his life, telling us where he was born, how he lived, how and for what reason he died. Surely these are historic and trustworthy! Let us admit that here is certain biographical material, some of which seems to be reliable, from which a partial idea of Jesus' life may be gained, yet we cannot say that the gospels are in any strict sense historic. A writing to be really historic must have a known and credible author who is thoroughly informed concerning the matter about which he writes, either from personal observation or from trustworthy sources. No anonymous production, remote from the events which it describes, can be accepted as historic proof, because no one knows or can know what were the author's sources of information, and whether he or they are to be trusted. This is the case with our gospels. In their present shape they are the work of unknown writers, living probably in the second century, and we have no means of ascertaining whether those writers were competent and reliable, or whether they had any accurate and trustworthy knowledge concerning the supposed facts which they record.

Ecclesiastical tradition for seventeen centuries has ascribed the authorship of the gospels to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. While ecclesiastical tradition is very venerable it is not historic certainty, and as historic certainty is what we are seeking, we are compelled to inquire into the basis of our venerable and world-honored tradition. Does it rest on solid facts or is it some cloud-shaped vision lying along the misty horizon of the past? "Authority for the tradition," it may be said, "there is ample. The fathers of the second century testify that the gospels were

written by their reputed authors." Then the old list of familiar names is rehearsed once more, Irenæus and Appollinaris and Tatian and Papias and Justin Martyr. But much of this testimony is doubtful and all of it is legendary and second-hand. Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 150 A. D., refers to certain memoirs of the apostles, but he does not indicate their authors.¹ Papias, who suffered martyrdom between 160 and 170 A. D., is reported by Eusebius, the unreliable ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, as being acquainted with certain oracles in the Hebrew language by Matthew, and also as saying that the presbyter John told him that Mark had written down the preaching of Peter as he remembered it.² Tatian about 170 A. D. made a compilation of four, or as some say five gospels, which is sometimes spoken of as the gospel by four or the gospel by five. Whatever his materials were, his result was so unlike the present four gospels that Theodoret in the fifth century everywhere suppressed it in the churches which he visited.³ Appollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, in the year 173 A. D. is the first who is reported to have ascribed the four gospels to their present authors.⁴ About the value of his testimony there is much dispute, but there is none about that of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who, A. D. 190, wrote that there were then existing four gospels which bore the names respectively of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.⁵ Previous to this the gospel of John had been mentioned by Theophilus of Antioch, not as written by the apostle but by "an inspired man."⁶ It is then the last quarter of the second century, 140-150 years after the death of Jesus before we find any historic individual definitely stating that our gospels were in existence and

¹ Dialogue with Trypho, ch 106; concerning Justin see Waite's History of Christian Religion, ch. 21.

² Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, B. III, ch. 39.

³ Theodoret Haeret. Fab. I, 20.

⁴ Supernatural Religion, Vol. I, p. 185.

⁵ Adv. Haer., Books II and III.

⁶ Ad. Autolycum, II, 22.

were written by the men whose names they bear. Doubtless some of them were in use at an earlier date. There are uncertain references to some of them between 150 and 175 A. D. But it is entirely within bounds to say that there is no certain historic proof of the existence of the gospels in their present shape until after the middle of the second century. The argument is sometimes presented that Irenæus is said to have been a pupil of Polycarp in his youth, and Polycarp, who died 155 A. D., is said to have been a disciple of John the Apostle. Now, if John wrote the gospel called by his name, Polycarp would have known it and he would have told Irenæus. Therefore, Irenæus' testimony is good historic evidence. But if John did not write the gospel then Polycarp could know nothing about it, and Irenæus would be the mere repeater of tradition. The argument is an assumption for which there is no sufficient proof. The historic evidence necessary to identify the personal friends and companions of Jesus with the authors of the writings which now bear their time-honored names, is wanting. There is no proof that these gospels existed in their present shape until after the middle of the second century; while the first ascription of them to these reputed authors if credited to Appollinaris, occurs in 173 A. D., or about 190 A. D., if credited to Irenæus.

But if there are no external proofs of authorship are there any clear internal ones? Where do their contents indicate that these books were written? Their contents indicate a later date than the first century, and they contain references to a condition of things and a state of thought not then existing. They exhibit a legendary growth and a historic inaccuracy which presuppose lapse of time and the absence of original witnesses. There is strong internal evidence that the gospel of John could not have been known until after the middle of the second century.¹ The other

¹ Notably its relation to Chiliasm, to Gnosticism and to the Paschal controversy of the second century.

three gospels seem to locate themselves near the second or third decades of that century, though any accuracy of date is impossible. These indications of late construction preclude the possibility of apostolic authorship.

Doubtless some memoranda of Jesus' life were made early. There are indications that many such were in existence in the second century. In the preface of the gospel of Luke it is stated that many writers had taken it in hand "to set forth a declaration of things" about Jesus. The writings of the fathers contain traces of some fifteen or twenty gospels now lost, including the gospel of Peter, the gospel to the Hebrews, the gospel to the Egyptians, the gospel of Bartholomew, etc. Some of these may have had wide and prolonged circulation. Theodoret found over two hundred copies of Tatian's gospel in the churches under his charge as late as the fifth century. The air was full of legend and tradition both in verbal and written form. Out of all the various accounts the church fathers gradually selected those which they deemed most complete and reliable, or those which best accorded with their theological notions, and doomed the rest to destruction. Would that we had all those memoirs ! How much they might help us to understand the life of Jesus ! How many unfilled gaps might be bridged, and how many dark places cleared up ! But they are hopelessly lost ; and we can only guess at their contents by the fragmentary quotations which the fathers have made from their pages. Of what a priceless wealth of literary treasure theological hate and prejudice have robbed mankind !

Is there any valid ground for belief in an historic Jesus ? Surely there is, although what we know about him is so largely tradition. Here is the gospel portraiture. Unsatisfactory as any may think it, it must have had an origin. There must have existed a pretty constant and coherent tradition about him, else four different compilers of so different temper, writing for different purposes, at different dates and under different conditions, would

not have given a picture of him so harmonious in its general features. There is enough difference to prove the tradition, but enough agreement to indicate a strong historic character around which tradition was gathering. No plausible theory of the existence of the gospels has been devised which leaves the real man out of the account. There is doubtless exaggeration and mistake in them; they have not the historic certainty we crave; but to suppose them founded on a myth and evolved by a theological necessity, is a sketch of credulity, the reverse of scientific. The criticism which recognizes in Buddha and Zoroaster and Odin, real men with historic existence, could not consistently deny it to Jesus, were his earthly life tenfold more obscure.

Not only are the gospels quite inexplicable on any other theory than that of an historic Jesus, but it is difficult to understand how Paul, who was a grown man at the supposed time of Jesus' death and who was afterward familiar with his reputed disciples, could have been deceived in regard to his existence. For although he does not enter into any detail, Paul bases his whole teaching on the fact of Jesus' life and death. Belief in the reality of that life and death permeates his writings. Now here is a man of great ability, shrewdness and insight, one of the world's wonderful men, who was connected with Christianity very early, was one of its leaders for twenty or thirty years, every page of whose writings presupposes the historic Jesus. If there was no Christ in the flesh, Paul was the most foolish of dupes or the most consummate of deceivers. He could hardly be a dupe, else his quarrels with the Judean apostles would have opened his eyes.¹ No deceiver ever wrote such tremendously earnest and honest letters, ever fought his way through so many obstacles for others' welfare, ever labored, suffered and died for his own lies with such tremendous enthusiasm. The epistles equally with the gospels are inexplicable without an historic living and dying in Judea. Paul,

¹ Gal. II, 1-14.

one of the world's grandest souls, becomes one of its egregious humbugs unless there is a Jesus standing behind.

Again the word and character of Jesus have a very strong impress of individuality. What a world-wide difference between the parables and the Sermon on the Mount and any other writing of the first and second century. If there was no Jesus there must have been somebody to have spoken those grand words, some clear soul in which the eternal truths of universal religion were mirrored. Who was it? Was it Paul? Why then does he not put some of the same thoughts into his letters? Was it some "great unknown?" Who is the great unknown save Jesus? Or is this only a fancy sketch by some obscure philosopher, depicting his ideal man? But who was the philosopher, and if he was so fine and wise why has he left no other trace in the world's history? It has been said that it would require a Jesus to imagine a Jesus, that such a life must have been lived because it would have been impossible otherwise to have conceived it. The statement can hardly be accepted, but of this we may feel sure, that no religious writer of the first century would draw such a picture, because it is so widely at variance with all the religious ideals of that century. The Jew had no such ideal; he was a fanatic for the ritual law and was waiting for the Messiah. This man disobeyed the law, broke the bonds of Judaism, did not fulfill in any particular the Messianic dream. The Stoic had no such ideal; he taught a robust, self-regarding virtue. This man was tender and shrinking, talked much about God, loved prayer and piety, died ignominiously to save others when he might have saved himself. The early Christians had no such ideal; waiving the incongruity of followers before there was a leader, the early Christians with their dreams of second comings and milleniums, of the ascended Messiah who was on the right hand of God, the Demi-urgos who created all things, the Logos who was with God and was God, were the last men to have written the parable of the

prodigal son or to have led their master through Gethsemane to Pilate's judgment hall. Indeed it is the attempt of the early Christians to crowd something of their ideas into the record of Jesus' life, and to make him an exponent of their wild dreams, which mars the simple beauty of the gospel story.

Finally, a great influence was somehow exerted among men, which has reached untold millions and religiously changed the face of half the world, and that influence can only have sprung from a great soul that gave it birth. A mighty work was wrought, hence we infer a noble worker. A divine word has been spoken, sounding clear and strong across the centuries, and we cannot but believe that there was a voice speaking, and behind the voice a man in whose ears the eternal truths were making celestial music. Nothing comes from nothing. The Sermon on the Mount and the Christian religion are too mighty to be born by chance. No growth without a germ, no statute without an artist, no deed without a doer. From the flint hatchet in the river bed we repopulate the stone age with its long since extinct inhabitants. From the Iliad we learn the glory and strength of Homer, though no country can claim his birthplace or his grave. From the religion which sprung out of the great heart of Jesus we gain a deep conviction of his intense personality, which no silence of Jew and Roman can shake. He does not shine upon us from the firmament of history as a sharply defined star whose course is measured and whose parallax determined, but rather as the sun through enshrouding mists, dimly seen indeed, but surely *there* behind all intervening clouds, giving warmth and light to the world.

THE STORY OF JESUS.

Behind the New Testament, behind Paul and Peter and John there was a Jesus—a Jesus of whom the gospels give, not the exact portrait, but rather the enlarged and distorted shadow which his grand figure has thrown upon the clouds of tradition. Undoubtedly the gospels contain much historic material, traditions which are valid, recollections of conversations and discourses which are reliable; but the record is so brief and broken, and is disfigured by so much that is myth and legend that it is impossible to ascribe to it definite historic value. While it seems possible to gain a rational idea of the life of Jesus—by noticing the order of events which is indicated rather than fairly told, by reading between the lines and by trying to ascertain the natural course of affairs and the real causes and motives which shape it, instead of accepting the fictitious causes which the writers often ascribe—it is quite obvious we can affirm absolute accuracy of none of our details. With all its verisimilitude the picture remains ideal rather than historic. The legend cannot be strictly verified. Disclaiming any pretense of going behind the gospel record, or of evolving a life of Jesus out of some inner historic consciousness, we assume the right to use reason in investigating that record, and to weave the threads of the broken story so as to reunite them as far as possible into a consistent whole. Where traditions clash it may be necessary to choose between them; where the evangelists ascribe supernatural reasons it may be wise to seek the natural reason; but we will put nothing into the story which is not already there, and will ascribe no motives which the actions and events do not themselves suggest. Waiving all doctrinal discussion and all

questions of the supernatural, we will try to tell the story of Jesus as the gospels sketch it.

Comparatively few persons have a distinct conception of Jesus' life. There is a general idea that he came into Galilee in a wonderful way some 1880 years ago, that he taught grand truths of religion, performed marvellous deeds, and at last died upon a cross ; but there is little familiarity with the specific events which outline his career. Few have any clear understanding of the combination of circumstances which raised the Galilean youth so suddenly to the dignity and power of a prophet, and with equal swiftness cast him a helpless prisoner into the hands of Pilate. There are two reasons for this ignorance. The tangled character of the story, mixed with marvel and complicated by the ascription of unreal causes to events, makes distinct conceptions difficult to obtain. Again, the popular thought about Jesus has been that he was Deity, and Deity is independent of circumstances and unshackled by surroundings. If Jesus is God, or if he is some mighty Being who acts with divine power and prescience, there is no incentive to seek causes. Where the First Cause is present secondary causes disappear. The apparent life is only a dramatic representation to give fitting scenery to the announcement of the divine plan of salvation. If everything was prearranged in the councils of eternity ; if Jesus and the priests and Judas and Pilate and the multitude were puppets running in foreordained grooves, what need of studying events and actions ? All that concerns us is to know the end accomplished. Because so many have a dim feeling that what happened in Palestine was a kind of stage tragedy, an exhibition of supernatural forces rather than an episode of genuine human life, has it come to pass that there is so little clear idea of the world's greatest benefactor. If this is God incarnate in a human form, we have only to listen and worship. If it is a man with a human heart in him, with human feelings and desires, actuated by human motives, tempted, tried, persecu-

ted, slain, yet grand, glorious, triumphant through it all, we want to learn how he gained so noble a manhood that the wondering world has called it godhood. Everything we can ascertain about him is of value, and the story of his life, if it could be fully written, would be the brightest gem in the crown of history. The gem being broken, even its smallest fragments are of value as indicating its original beauty.

There lived in Judea about 1850 years ago Jesus of Nazareth. He was a man of lowly birth and humble life. His parents were Galilean peasants. Tradition says his father was a carpenter, and also made yokes and ploughs and tables; says also that the son assisted the father at his laborious trade. Of his earlier years there is no reliable record. Two of the gospels make no mention of his youth; the others give marvellous accounts of his birth which differ from each other and are both obviously unhistoric. The first two chapters of Matthew are so full of dreams and marvels that they at once rank themselves alongside those other gospels of the infancy, which relate many unsavory miracles as having occurred at the time of Jesus' birth and during his earliest childhood. In the account of Luke the miraculous element goes beyond Jesus and attaches also to the birth of John the Baptist. The historic discrepancy between Matthew and Luke is very serious. In Matthew, Joseph and Mary are dwellers in Bethlehem, in Luke, they are inhabitants of Nazareth.¹ Immediately after the birth of Jesus, Matthew sends the holy family into Egypt for some six years. Luke brings them to Jerusalem after thirty days for a visit, and then takes them home to Nazareth, where they remain.² Luke places the birth of Jesus at a time when Quirinus made a census of Judea some three or four years after the death of Herod the Great.³ Matthew dates it some ten years previous, while

¹ Comp. Matt. II, 1-9 and Luke I, 26.

² Matthew II, 11, Luke II, 31, 32, 39.

³ Luke II, 2.

Herod was yet alive.¹ If Luke is right, Herod did not slaughter and could not have slaughtered the innocents, since he was already dead. If Matthew is right, Joseph did not go to Bethlehem to be taxed and the story of the overfull inn and the manger-cradle falls to the ground. Both fragments are wholly unhistoric and unreliable.

All these stories of dreams, this framing of narrative to explain misunderstood prophecy, this startling appearance of angels, these miraculous births, find abundant parallel in the legends of mythology. Many a great man in the ancient world was considered a son of the gods, being honored with a goddess for his mother, a god for his father, or with a celestial parentage on both sides. When Jesus' greatness became evident, a later generation hung around him this nimbus of divine descent. But it was not thought of by his relatives and friends, else they could have entertained no doubt of his superhuman authority. Two things invalidate all these marvels of the infancy. First, the Galilean Christians, among whom were Jesus' friends and relatives, had none of these legends and never received the traditions. It is expressly stated that the gospel of the Hebrews had no tales of the infancy.² Secondly, if Jesus' birth was such as is recorded in Matthew and Luke could his own brothers have distrusted his divinity? But they did not for a long time believe that he was even a prophet. It would seem that this single fact that his neighbors and his own family had no suspicion of his power, were surprised at his notoriety and were incredulous of his claims, should at once reduce all the miraculous legends of his birth to their proper rank as fables of a later age. It is hardly supposable that men would lose sight, or his own family forget the claims, of one whose birth was foretold by angels, occurred in violation of natural law and order, was welcomed by celestial choirs chanting heavenly anthems, caused a

¹ Matt. II, 1-19.

² See Michaelis, Vol. 3; Norton, Vol. 2, et al.

new star to appear in the skies, drew the Persian Magi from their far homes to worship, and brought upon an innocent city the destruction of all its little children. So small is the probability of this forgetfulness that we must ascribe to credulity rather than to reason, the general assent to these mythic fables. We have no reliable trace of the childhood and youth of Jesus. We can only suppose that after the manner of other Hebrew children he lived with his father and mother, played and talked with his brothers and sisters, and wrought at such tasks as befell him in his lowly home at Nazareth. A child of the people he shared the hard, poor life of the common people in those early days.

Our sketch of Jesus then begins with his entrance in early manhood upon his public career and is limited to the very brief period of that career. When Jesus was about thirty years old a new prophet, John the Baptizer, began to preach in Judea abstemiousness and reform. A strong, rugged, earnest man, he awakened great interest and enthusiasm. People crowded to hear him and enrolled themselves as his disciples through the ancient rite of baptism. John was a legitimate successor of the old Hebrew prophets, partly a moral reformer, partly a patriotic leader. The popular mind was in a very inflammable condition; there was an uneasy expectation of great events. All zealous Hebrews were waiting for the Messiah, whom they thought their scriptures promised, to come and restore Israel to its former grandeur. John shared in this expectation, was laboring to prepare the way for its realization, perhaps was willing to realize it himself if he proved to be the expected one. He gathered about him a people ripe for rebellion, and if circumstances had favored, might, perhaps, have been ready to attempt such a popular rising as Judas the Maccabee was successful in 200 years previously. Whatever his plans he was a true people's leader, attracting much attention among his fellow countrymen and obtaining from Josephus such historic notice as Jesus fails to win.

With the multitude comes Jesus seeking baptism. John, possibly knowing him previously (tradition makes them relatives), recognizes his finer spirit, as the rough, practical man usually acknowledges the superior genius of the contemplative one, and points him out as the expected leader. This is the initial step of Jesus' ministry. We may suppose that he had previously cherished many noble thoughts and high dreams, that his soul had been stirred by the bigotry and superstition of his countrymen, that he had felt God's presence and love and had talked about them to his friends, but now the great prophet, to whom all the people were looking, had given him words of commendation, had predicted his eminence, had even intimated that "this was he who should redeem Israel."

Can we wonder that it was a sore trial hour to the unknown young man, that it required all his manhood to resist the alluring suggestions of fame and power which would creep in, and to keep his soul pure and honest and true? Doubtless there was temptation, powerful temptation of high ambition if there was any human nature in him, but we cannot credit the mythic tale of a forty days strife with the devil. For one tradition says that John, Andrew and Peter joined him the day after his baptism, that the next day they went into Galilee and the third day were at a wedding in the village of Cana.¹ This tale of the temptation is an attempt to create scenery for a fact which all will admit, the fact that the sudden opening of a great career was a mighty temptation even to the single-hearted Jesus.

Right here at the beginning of the story a wide discrepancy arises between John and the other evangelists. The other evangelists conduct Jesus immediately to Galilee, represent him as commencing his work there and make no mention of any visit to Jerusalem until the time of his death. John describes several visits to Jerusalem prior to the beginning of his chief Galilean labors. All,

however, agree that he did not begin to preach in Galilee until after John the Baptist was imprisoned; and as John the Evangelist places the Jerusalem visits before this, we may weave them into the story, though uncertain of their value.

After his baptism and the wedding at Cana, it being near the time of the annual passover festival, which occurs about the first of April, Jesus goes with his fellow Galileans to Jerusalem. He seems to have begun his work by conversation with the religious leaders. The glowing young prophet, full of noble inspirations, accustomed to reverence the priests and Pharisees at Jerusalem as pure and holy above others, goes to them with his new truth and life, that they may infuse its spirit into the popular faith and inaugurate reform. In his generous and untried enthusiasm he may really have expected recognition and respect, as Luther thought at first he might induce the church to correct its own abuses and honor its critic. Of course, they turned the cold shoulder on him. They asked for a sign; they demanded supernatural authority. One of them, Nicodemus, comes to him by night and hears startling doctrine. But the rest have no faith in this Galilean youth. Why should these grave doctors of the law pay attention to this unknown Nazarene peasant. Out of Nazareth ariseth no prophet. He may have been disappointed, but does not openly commit himself against them; and when they suggest to him that his teaching may interfere with John he goes quietly back to Galilee. At another feast, which may have been the feast of Pentecost, forty days later, or may have been the next year's Passover, he goes again to Jerusalem, and has another colloquy, or perhaps controversy, with these leading Jews. This time the former distrust breaks out into open hostility. He heals a lame man on the Sabbath. They rebuke him for breaking the law of Moses, and desecrating holy time. He defends himself, condemns their servility to the letter of the law, and declares that God worketh always, thus criticising their doctrine

that he worked six days and specially hallowed the seventh by resting. They are so angered by his infidelity and presumption that they seek to kill him. Thus ends his peaceful intercourse with the priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem. They refuse to listen to his new word, and drive him from Judea as a heretic and a lawbreaker. But he does not wholly give up the sacred city: It is now the early or the late spring, according as we call this last feast a Passover or a Pentecost. He remains in Galilee, doing nothing of which we have any tradition, keeping himself secret, his brothers declare, until the middle of September, when, at the feast of the Tabernacles, the annual thanksgiving, he again visits Jerusalem. This time he goes up by stealth, avoiding the priests and leaders, and does not present himself at the opening of the festival. The people inquire after him, for he was beginning to attract attention. They privately discuss his character and his non-appearance. In the midst of the feast he presents himself; goes not to the Pharisees, but directly to the Temple; takes a prominent place and addresses himself, it would seem for the first time, to the people. They are amazed that he should assume so publicly a teacher's place, and say, one to another: "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? Do the rulers indeed know that this is the Messiah." The priests and Pharisees are enraged at his audacity. They send the police of the Temple to apprehend him; but the officers sympathise with the multitude and return without him. They then raise a tumult and try to stone him. The people shield him and he escapes. But he again openly transgresses Sabbath law, and for this crime against Moses and religion, the Sanhedrin, the nation's supreme court, solemnly condemns him to death, thus giving a legal form to what they failed to accomplish by mob violence. It also passes sentence of excommunication upon all his disciples. For some of the people believed on him, while others doubted whether he were not insane. But he escapes

harm, and at the close of the feast returns safely to his native town.

Thus ends his attempt to obtain recognition at Jerusalem. The tradition is that he made three visits there before he began his public teaching in Galilee, on three festival occasions, during the last of which he attempted to teach publicly in the temple. He was received the first time with indifference. The second time he was persecuted. At his third visit they try to stone him, and in solemn national council condemn him to death. The story of these three visits is contained in the first ten chapters of John, omitting the sixth chapter, which is unaccountably misplaced. There is no hint of them in the other gospels. They give no account of any teaching until a later date. We may call this the first part of Jesus' ministry—his unsuccessful appeal to the priests and people of Jerusalem. The time occupied therein is uncertain. Perhaps six months, perhaps a year and a half; but it all seems to have happened before Jesus begun to teach in Galilee. The first three evangelists know nothing about it.¹

With sentence of death against him in Jerusalem, Jesus hastens back to Galilee. As he goes he meets startling news. John, the great popular leader, has been seized and imprisoned by Herod Antipas, the Galilean governor, on account of his growing power and influence. The whole province is in a fever. Every man who longed for the new kingdom is angry and expectant. A great crisis seems at hand. Jesus, fresh from his Judean experiences, comes in full enthusiasm of the spirit to meet these excited, earnest men. This is a new and promising field. He must take up and finish John's work. He must proclaim every-

¹ The problem of the length of Jesus' ministry is probably an insoluble one. The chief difficulty is in the arrangement of these festal visits prior to the commencement of the public Galilean ministry. From the imprisonment of John to the end, the story moves forward without a break. Comp. Matt. IV, 12, *et seq.* with Mark I, 14, 21, *et seq.*, and Luke IV, 33, *et seq.*

where his grand truth that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now everything changes. Jerusalem and the temple disappear, subtle discussion ceases. The lake side and the mountain furnish scenery; the Galilean peasantry are the audience. It is open-air life and open-air talk. Now comes the sermon on the mount, and all those parables which smack of rural scenes and occupations. Everything is in constant movement; is full of intense activity. No more waiting from feast to feast; but every day is crowded full of work. The catch words by which we pass from event to event breathe signal promptness and energy. "And as he went;" "and as he entered;" "and it came to pass the day after;" "and the same day when evening was come;" such are the compact abrupt connections which lead us on. There is a common notion that Jesus lingered around Capernaum, teaching here and there, and now and then in an occasional, itinerant way for some years. But the gospels indicate that in one short autumn he roused Galilee, saw face to face its excited peasantry, and set the whole province in a blaze. There is no pause, no rest. From place to place, with the multitude following him, he goes proclaiming this strange new word, "The kingdom of God is at hand." He concentrates his whole power and energy into a grand enthusiastic effort. The light had come, and it flashed far and wide. John saw it in his dungeon, and sent messengers to ask if the Messianic day had dawned.

Soon Jesus selects assistants to go out two and two, preaching the coming kingdom. Though Galilee is a petty province, his own feet cannot traverse it quickly enough. First twelve, then seventy in a few days go out in all directions proclaiming everywhere "The kingdom of God at hand. God here and now; now, not to-morrow; here, not in heaven." These were the words which rang through Galilee in those autumn days, arousing the men thereof to the knowledge that the new time had come. It is like no other human movement. Here were the people eager for

the grand Messianic kingdom, stirred to immediate expectation of it by John's preaching, fierce with disappointment on account of his imprisonment. Jesus' words seem to give promise of that kingdom. Religion, patriotism, every high sentiment and some passions made instant and ardent response. The spirit of a grand triumphal work sweeps through the chapters which describe this preaching in Galilee. A great wave of life is dashing over hills and valleys. The story is contained between the fourth and fourteenth chapters of Matthew, and in the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke. During the latter part of this time Jesus may have made a flying visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication in November, rousing the hatred of the Pharisees to the highest pitch by his words and deeds, awaking in them also something of fear, as they saw how the hardy north country flocked after him, believed in him and supported him.

This successful appeal to the Galilean people is the second part of the public life of Jesus. It is the high noon of his mission ; a grand hour full of work and triumph, but even now passing. Already his sun is turning towards the west. Now eager multitudes throng him ; he enters centurions' houses ; he sits at rich men's tables. Everywhere throughout Galilee his word is eagerly listened to ; everywhere he is honored, loved, revered. Soon a homeless wanderer, with a few faithful friends, he will flee from place to place, with no spot where to lay his head. For an unexpected event happens which abruptly terminates this great movement. This event, which changed the whole face of affairs, and formed a sharp turning point in Jesus' life, was the sudden murder of John the Baptist in Herod's dungeon at Machaerus.

Herod Antipas had thrown John into prison, partly through fear of his influence, and partly, perhaps, because John interfered with his domestic affairs. Herod's wife Herodias was his own niece, and had formerly been the wife of his half-brother, from

whom she ran away without the form of a divorce. John is said to have criticised this arrangement sharply, making so bitter an enemy of Herodias that she determined to bring about his death. The Gospel legend runs that she sent her daughter, Salome, to dance before Herod and his captains and chief men at one of their revels, and when the excited governor promised the danseuse whatever reward she might ask, she assisted her mother to her revenge by demanding John the Baptist's head. The legend bears marks of improbability. It was hardly the custom of Jewish girls of high station to dance eastern lascivious dances before half drunken soldiers. Besides, the real Salome is said to have been a wife, if not a widow, at this time. Whatever the occasion, John was beheaded in the fortress of Machaerus.

John's disciples were full of indignation at their prophet's imprisonment, but his murder aroused deepest sorrow and fiercest rage. They take up his body and bury it. This burial was no secret midnight service, in which a few faithful friends lay the sods above a fallen martyr, and then vanish to their hiding places. It was the public protest of an outraged people, making an indignant demonstration in honor of their murdered leader. All Galilee participated in the feeling. When, soon afterward, Herod suffered a disastrous military defeat, the multitude said it was God's judgment upon him for John's murder. After the disciples had buried their prophet they hasten to tell Jesus. This is the crisis of his mission.

The multitude, which had been looking to John as a leader, now turns to Jesus. It remembers John's predictions concerning him; remembers that John had designated him as his successor; had predicted, perhaps, that he was the Messiah who was to redeem Israel. During John's imprisonment had not Jesus been proclaiming everywhere that the "kingdom of God" (and by this phrase it understood the Messianic kingdom) "was at hand!" Will he not now take up and finish John's work,

avenge his death, and inaugurate that kingdom? When Jesus hears of his friend's death and learns the temper of the people he shuns them and goes away into a desert place apart. The people follow him on foot out of all the cities and villages. They will have him for leader. They are impatient of delay. The time is ripe for the establishment of the new kingdom. They demand that he shall be KING, are ready to take him by force and crown him.¹ But he will not be king. Grand as is the mission of a patriotic leader freeing his country, it is not his mission. They had misunderstood his meaning. The kingdom of God which he had proclaimed was not a Jewish monarchy, but the eternal reign of right and truth among men. Let us readily believe also that he was sufficiently free from the passion of the multitude to recognize the foolhardiness of unorganized popular insurrection against the mighty, military power of Rome. But the people are hot for rebellion and confident of success under his leadership. He has preached the kingdom at hand. Let him fulfil his own word. Here in this mountain region by the lake is a fit place to raise the Messianic standard and inaugurate the new dispensation.

How can he resist this demand of the people, so natural and so determined. It avails nothing to tell them they have mistaken the character of his kingdom. They are in no humor for correcting mistakes. Hence he must avoid them. He sends the disciples away in the only boat which is there, and then persuades the people to retire. They, feeling sure that he has no means of departure, leave him alone for the night on the mountain side. What a night was that for Jesus, as between the lonely mountain and the lonely sea, he bows his soul in prayer. With the morning the people reassemble to renew their demand. But Jesus is not there. There was no apparent means of escape, but he is gone. His disciples say that their boat being driven back

¹ John VI, 15. Comp. John VI, 1-24, with Matt. XIV, 1-34, Mark VI, 14-56, and Luke VIII, 22-26 and Luke IX, 10-17.

to the shore by a sudden tempest, he came to them on the water with words of calmness and cheer. Soon boats from the city of Tiberias are at hand. With these the people commence a search for their missing leader, whom they at last find across the lake in the region of Genesaret. Here they again crowd around him, enthusiastic and urgent.

But this popular movement excites attention. Herod noting it takes alarm. He says: "Who is this new leader? I have beheaded John the Baptist; has he risen from the dead? If not, who is this Jesus, whose name is on every tongue?" Whoever he is, this growing excitement, this incipient insurrection, must be suppressed. What way so effectual as the arrest and imprisonment of this fresh disturber. From that time Herod sought to apprehend him. Aware of the danger and conscious of his inability to restrain the multitude, Jesus seeks privacy. These crowds compromise him, expose him to suspicion and danger. They do not come to listen quietly to his teaching, but are full of Messianic enthusiasm and political disaffection. Hence he studies to avoid them. Two months previously he sought utmost publicity; now he does not wish any man to know where he is. If he performs cures, instead of telling the healed as formerly to proclaim everywhere what God had done for them, he enjoins the strictest silence, bidding them go straight to their homes and not to "enter into any village or to tell it to any one belonging to a village." It may have puzzled some readers to understand why Jesus' method was so different at different times; why at one period he seeks publicity and at another enjoins secrecy and silence; why he sends his disciples through the whole land proclaiming his kingdom now, and in a few weeks forbids them even to tell the place where he was. The explanation of this seeming caprice is in the changed temper of the people and the changed circumstances of his position. Formerly publicity helped on his mission, now it exposes him to danger and death.

But his precautions are unavailing. The more he shuns the people the more they seek him. The healed publish everywhere the tidings. Suspicious Herod watches. At length he is compelled to leave Galilee and go to the region of Tyre and Sidon, by the Mediterranean sea. Henceforth he is a wanderer with no place to lay his head. In this region of Tyre and Sidon he desires to be unknown. But he soon grows famous even among the Syrophenicians. Hence he abandons the neighborhood and returns to the hill country north of the Lake of Galilee, called the coasts of Decapolis. Here the multitude discovers his whereabouts and flocks around him as before. He crosses the lake in various directions; sometimes coming into the vicinity of Capernaum and Tiberias; sometimes seeking the desolate, rocky shores of Magdala and Dalmunutha; all the while wishing seclusion. But the people search him out and follow him—to the mountain, to the desert, and by night across the sea; they faint for want of food, but they will not leave him; will not relinquish their hope that he will establish the Messianic kingdom. Finally, he abandons Galilee entirely, retiring to the vicinity of the Syrian city of Cesarea Philippi,¹ the Gospel of John says to a little village called Ephraim, and adds that he “walked no more openly among the Jews, but continued there with his disciples.”² Here he remained until “the passover was at hand,” that is, until some time previous to the first of April. Jesus probably began to preach in Galilee after the feast of the Tabernacles in September. It is now the last of March. Bearing these dates in mind you will see how crowded the half year has been with events.

Jesus' mission in Galilee is now at an end. Indeed it practically closed when the people ceased to seek him as a religious teacher and crowded about him as John's avenger, as the king of a new kingdom. The remaining question is what shall be the

¹ Matt. XV, 21; XVI, 13. Mark XII, 24, 31.

² John XI, 54.

end. Three courses are open, continued exile, return to Galilee to meet imprisonment at Herod's hands, return to Jerusalem at the hazard of death as a religious reformer. He wisely chose the last alternative. Prolonged exile or incarceration in Herod's dungeons was deadlier than death to him. At Jerusalem his mission is best understood. He will go there once more, and if he must die, Jerusalem which has stoned the prophets, shall see and shall work the end. Besides the feast of the passover is once more at hand, and if he will not seem to despise Moses and the law he must celebrate this greatest of all religious anniversaries in accordance with the sacred Hebrew custom, at the holy city.

Of course he will go. Forsaking his retreat at Cesarea Philippi, he hastens through Galilee, passing rapidly by his old home and leaving for ever behind the loved, familiar places. As he goes he talks to his accompanying disciples of his probable death at Jerusalem, tells them of the obloquy which he may be obliged to endure. It shocks them. They do not know what he means. They are expecting triumph and to sit on thrones judging Israel. He is talking of persecution and death. We are not to suppose Jesus always foretold his death. He probably does not mention it until he sees the toils closing so rapidly about him that there is no probability of escape. But thenceforth he tries to prepare his reluctant, disappointed companions for the imminent end. Quickly as he goes through Galilee, Herod hears of him. A friendly Pharisee gives him a hint of impending danger. He does not need the hint; he understands the situation. "Go tell that fox, lo! I cast out devils and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I make an end. But to-day and to-morrow and the third day I must go on, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." In two days he would be beyond Herod's power, for he was going to the holy city to meet his fate. And so he travels on out of dear, old Galilee, across the Jordan, and by the way of Jericho, up to the feast, with the

thronging multitude all about him bringing their sick and shouting hosannas.

For now the time of secrecy and flight is over. He has chosen his course. Whatever the end, crowds no longer compromise him. As a prophet of the Lord he comes with his disciples to teach once more in the sacred temple. Just now there is safety rather than danger in this enthusiastic multitude. Thus surrounded no Pharisee or priest will try to molest him. And so by the broad highway through Bethpage and Bethany over the Mount of Olives and down towards the gates of the holy city glittering in the sunshine, he goes in loud, triumphal procession. Some one recalls the tradition that the Messiah shall ride on an ass's colt. Immediately they bring one. They place on it their choicest raiment. They seat Jesus thereon. A great noisy throng goes before and behind in tumultuous procession. Wild with enthusiasm they cast their garments before him. Pulling down the palm branches they wave them in triumph, and strew them in his path. Loud voiced they shout "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest." As the triumphant throng sweeps down the sides of Olivet, amazed Jerusalem stands wonderstruck asking, "What means all this? Who is this man?" The multitude answers: "This is Jesus the prophet of Galilee; him whom your priests and rulers have scornfully cast out and condemned to death, do we, the people, bring back in triumph thus." Through the gates, along the winding streets, up into the spacious temple courts pours the excited, ever-increasing throng. The enthusiasm spreads wider and wider until even the children of the city take up the cry and shout "Hosanna to the son of David," along the sacred corridors. Here the demonstration ends, and Jesus, after driving out the money changers, retires quietly to Bethany and passes the night there with his friends.

No wonder the priests and Pharisees were troubled; no wonder

they said savagely one to another. "See how we prevail nothing, all the world has gone after him." The man whom they had despised, whom they had condemned as a criminal six months ago, compelling him to flee for his life, whom, perhaps, they had almost forgotten, only hearing now and then that Herod had driven him out of Galilee, this man has come back *thus*, has come with all Judea shouting around him, boldly, triumphantly into the city, in spite of their death sentence, rebuking them, bearding them, using his whips of small cords in their very temple. Henceforth they set themselves with deadly desperation to work his ruin.

It is now the first of April, six days before the Passover. During these six days Jesus goes to the temple every morning, talking with his disciples, teaching the people, rebuking the religious aristocracy. Now he utters those scathing rebukes of the pride, hypocrisy and wickedness of the Pharisees, which burn so fiercely on the pages of the New Testament. It is not probable that Jesus always denounced the religious leaders of his country out of some divine instinct of their falseness. He tried them thoroughly first, tried to reason with them, tried to persuade them to listen to his word. They scorned him and tried to kill him. He learned by sharp experience the truth of every accusation. Now he shows their true character, paints the picture of their falseness in colors which will endure while time lasts. The man whom they had condemned takes the judgment seat and reads them their eternal sentence. The enraged priests wish to seize him in the temple. But this is his hour; the multitude believes in him, exults in his strong words, throngs around him and protects him. The priests dare not attack him by day; every night he goes out to Bethany, where he has many friends, and close about him always are those resolute Galileans. It will not be wise to follow him to Bethany.

So they lay a snare for him. They come to him with a knotty question. "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?" If he says

"pay," he is acknowledging the rightfulness of the Roman rule, which would deeply offend the jealous patriotism of the people and bring him into disgrace with them. He could be no prophet to them, much less the Messiah, who counseled submission to foreign dominion. If he says "do not pay," it is open rebellion, and though the multitude may applaud, Pilate will swiftly punish. He avoids the dilemma by the shrewd answer, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's."

Fearing to take him by force, failing to entrap him by cunning, they resort to the last expedient, bribery. They corrupt Judas and hire him to watch for an opportunity to bring their guards upon his master in the absence of the people. Yet how can this be done when his days are spent in the crowded temple and his nights in friendly Bethany? Judas avails himself of the single occasion on which it could be readily accomplished—the night of the great passover feast. According to ancient Hebrew custom this feast was usually kept in small household like parties within the walls of Jerusalem. The feast night offers the coveted opportunity of betrayal. Jesus is aware of the treachery, sees the danger, feels that the end is at hand; yet he calmly keeps the feast, comforts his dismayed disciples, and when Judas leaves the table to bring the officers to the house, goes with the eleven out of the city to the lonely garden of Gethsemane, thus making, it would seem, a final effort for safety. But Judas knew the place, and finding on his return the supper room empty, guesses rightly his resort and leads the police of the temple to their victim. With slight resistance they seize him under the olive trees and drag him away through the sleeping city to the high priest's house where at this illegal, midnight hour the Sanhedrin was assembled.

The priests have their prisoner, but they have no formal accusation against him. They bribe witnesses as they bought Judas. The witnesses do not agree; the testimony is so worthless that

even this secret religious council, stimulated by bitter hate, dare not condemn him upon it. Morning draws near and something must be decided. They cannot put him to death privately; Roman law is too strict for that. They cannot keep him a prisoner; in the morning the people will awake, those Galileans and this multitude, and will demand their prophet. Before the people have shaken off their deep, festal sleep, Jesus must be in Pilate's custody, whence no tumultuous mob will attempt to snatch him. But Pilate is no trifler, some respectable charge must be brought or he will set their prisoner free. Time presses, witnesses are wanting, they resort at last to forced confession. The high priest exclaims: "I adjure thee by the living God, art thou the Christ the Son of God." He replies, "I am." Rending his clothes the high priest declares there is no farther need of witnesses since their own ears have heard his blasphemy. The Sanhedrin applauds the declaration and swiftly condemns Jesus to death.

Away with him now in the early morning through the still streets, to the Roman judgment hall, call up Pilate and persuade him to confirm and execute the sentence, for this Sanhedrin has no power of life and death. But Pilate objects; on inquiry he finds no fault in the man. He has no confidence in these priests; their accusation carries no weight; he presumes it is a case of persecution. "If it is a question of religion I will have nothing to do with it; you have a law, judge him yourselves." "By our law he ought to die," reply the priests, "but you will not allow us to put him to death. Besides he is an insurrectionist; he stirred up the people in Galilee and made a tumult." When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean and therefore Herod's subject, he sends him to Herod who was then in Jerusalem, glad to rid himself thus of the whole matter. But Herod who sought to apprehend Jesus in Galilee is as powerless as the priests here in Jerusalem. Hence after "mocking" him with his men of war, he sends him back to Pilate. After some further questioning which

seems to have impressed him deeply with Jesus' lofty character, Pilate again desires to set him free. But the priests invent a new indictment; they accuse Jesus of aspiring to be king of the Jews and thus rebelling against Cæsar, and if Pilate does not crucify him for this he is not Cæsar's friend. Here is a new phase of the affair. They care little at Rome about religious innovation, but political pretension meets severest punishment. Pilate has already been once accused by these same priests of disloyalty to Cæsar, and he does not wish to meet the charge a second time. But he makes a final attempt to save Jesus. It is the custom to release some prisoner at this feast, on the people's petition, as an act of executive clemency. Pilate turns from the priests to the multitude and proposes that it demand Jesus' liberty; but the multitude, which consisted not of the true people but of the mob of priestly satellites and temple loungers, instructed by its masters, exclaims, "not this man but Barrabas, the insurgent leader." Pilate foiled here, turns once more to the priests. "What shall I do with this man? What evil hath he done?" They cry out "crucify him." "But will you that I crucify your king?" They shout again. "We have no king but Cæsar. Away with him, crucify him, crucify him."

With no further excuse for delay and fearing, in the precarious temper of the people, lest these furious priests might raise a tumult and create serious trouble, both in Jerusalem and at Rome, if he persists in refusing their demand, Pilate yields, delivers Jesus to his soldiers, who scourge him, crown him with thorns, and lead him away to death. The sleeping city wakes to find the prophet whom yesterday it adored, hanging on a cross around which flashed the sharp spears and the polished armor of the Roman legions. A black deed of hate and treachery had been perpetrated under the sheltering darkness of a sacred night, and the people who loved him could only stand afar off and weep. "About the ninth hour" the brave soul went up to God,

and when the evening came, his sad friends laid the broken body in Joseph's new tomb. The grand, sweet life is done. It closed in darkness and blood; but how brightly it shines above them. Amid the mad rage of the priests, the clamors of the mob, and the anxiety of Pilate, how calm and serene that face under the crown of thorns.

The death of Jesus was the natural and necessary conclusion of his life. Not, however, because he was a foreordained sacrifice, but because it was impossible in that age for any one to teach a religion which controverted the common faith and condemned its superstitions, and escape death. Toleration was unknown. Even the Roman rulers, though quite indifferent to religion, were inclined to condemn new modes of worship as disaffection to the state. The emperor being also Pontifex Maximus, sectaries might readily be accused of faulty allegiance and loyalty. It was impossible for Jesus to safely teach a new doctrine of God and duty, unless he could carry the religious leaders of his nation along with him. In this he failed, and failure was certain death. The sympathy of the people availed little; for it was unorganized and unpractical. It could shout hosannas and crowd the temple, but it could not foil the vigilant hate of the priests, guard him in the hours of darkness, or attempt a rescue from the cross. Death is the penalty of heresy. This has been the declaration of all faiths. Doubtless Jesus might have easily evaded his fate if he had relinquished all attempts to inspire men with his new thought of the kingdom of God. But he could not, for safety's sake, abandon his prophetic mission. He could surrender life, but he could not be faithless to his divine duty.

The ultimate cause of Jesus' death was that he sought to introduce a new life and spirit, and the old life and spirit were too strong to be overcome by his personal endeavors. He tried to uproot the old mountain of error and abuse, and it fell on him and crushed him. The established order crucifies him, even

though his influence is sure at last to overthrow the established order. The immediate occasion of his arrest is the bitter hatred of the priests, stirred by his sharp attacks upon their methods, his denunciation of their personal character, and his almost scornful indifference to their ceremonial law. He did not respect their prejudices; he criticised their interpretations; he condemned their practices; he called them hypocrites, sons of Belial, children of Gehenna. The proud, religious aristocracy, boasting of the blood of Moses and Abraham, would not brook such an arraignment from the Nazarene. The particular charge of which the Sanhedrin finds him guilty is blasphemy. When asked if he was the Son of God, he replies "I am." How could he who taught all men to say "Our Father" answer otherwise? How could he deny the truth for himself which he affirmed for all? The charge may seem trivial for the Sanhedrin to prefer, but it involves the divinest idea of his teaching. He suffers for the very central truth of his religion, the universal Fatherhood of God.

But this charge of blasphemy is valueless before Pilate. He cares nothing about Jewish religious notions. In the Roman judgment hall the accusation is of political pretention and disturbance. And so it happened that one who never breathed a word against the government, who shunned all possible complication with tumult, who taught that Cæsar should have his own, was put to death as a political pretender, with the ironic inscription, "The King of the Jews," over his head. Pilate, who is convinced of his innocence, would have saved him, but he was not firm enough in his gubernatorial seat to incur the hate of the priesthood, and to risk the possible tumult they might raise among the mad zealots about the temple.

From the gospel story it does not appear that Jesus' crucifixion was attended with any unusual cruelty. He simply underwent the savage, Roman death-penalty. He fell into the hands of men familiar with blood, destitute of nerves, to whom tenderness was

unknown; but there were no extra indignities or torture. Indeed, tradition indicates a slight lenity. He was granted assistance in bearing his cross. They offered him soporific drink to quench his burning thirst and blunt the edge of pain. For some cause his sufferings were brief, only three or six hours (the legends differ), instead of three or more days. Even the rough soldiers seemed touched with pity. They refrained from mutilating his body, and perhaps the spear thrust may have been the act of mercy which shortened his agonies. Tradition says that this sympathy was shared by inanimate nature; that preternatural darkness fell on the land; a great earthquake rent the hills and tore the veil of the temple in twain, and the sheeted dead walked through the gloom in the streets of Jerusalem. Whatever may be thought of the character of Jesus, only extreme credulity will enable us to believe that his death caused serious disturbance among the universal forces of nature or any inversion of her laws. Great moral and spiritual movements are without noise or observation. Deity is not a stage Jupiter who always thunders when He speaks. He works in silence, and does not sound a trumpet before Him. Because Jesus' death was a great moral event, does it seem wholly improbable that it was accompanied with theatric display.

But so tragic a death, closing so remarkable a life, shed the glory of martyrdom over it all. It raised Jesus at once from the real into the shining, but somewhat intangible, realm of the ideal. His form dilated and grew grander, until at last it was wholly transfigured. Personal love became reverence, adoration, and in time worship of the divinity in this great humanity. And as his person was idealized, his self-sacrifice, his consecration to truth and duty, his devotion to humanity, shone forth sublimely attractive and inspiring. Being thus "lifted up" he drew "all men unto him." In the most true and manly way he reached the highest of life, the mount of entire self-renunciation, and standing there,

with his face full of sweetness and strength, he blesses and redeems the world. This grand self-renunciation for God and duty is the very blossoming of humanity into divinity. Through reverencing it men have grown into something of its likeness; through gazing at the glory of it their own faces begin to shine.

THE LEGEND OF THE RESURRECTION.

Whoever has read the legend of the resurrection, as recorded in the New Testament, with attention, has noticed that there is a marked difference between the various versions. Some of them are brief and uncircumstantial, others are elaborate and full of incident. It may also have been noticed that the briefer accounts occur in those Gospels which, either in their present or in some older form, are usually considered of earliest authorship, while the more elaborate stories are of later date. This indicates that the legend grew more complex and circumstantial as it grew older, and probably attained its finished form at the hands of non-residents of Judea in the second century. To set forth this difference clearly it will be necessary to refer somewhat in detail to accounts of the different writers.

We will begin with the Gospel of Mark because its simple story seems to be the oldest. The account is comprised in the first eight verses of the sixteenth chapter. The remaining twelve verses of this chapter are in the judgment of Tischendorf, Griesbach and Alvord, an addition of the fourth or fifth century. The first eight verses of this chapter read thus: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre they saw a young man

sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment ; and they were affrighted. And he said unto them. Be not affrighted : Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified ; he is risen ; he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre ; for they trembled and were amazed ; neither said they anything to any man ; for they were afraid."¹

This is the briefest and probably the earliest of our accounts of the resurrection. There is nothing said about seeing Jesus. The three frightened women find an empty tomb and a young man sitting there, who told them that Jesus was not dead, but was alive and had gone to Galilee. There is no statement that any of the disciples went there to meet him, that they ever saw him or heard of him again. If this Gospel of Mark is based upon a lost Gospel of Peter, as tradition asserts, its omissions are very significant, since in later accounts Peter is very prominent in the resurrection scenes.² This is the first form of the legend. The women found an empty grave and a young man sitting there who told them that he would meet his disciples in Galilee. And nothing more, save that the women were frightened and kept the whole matter to themselves.

The Gospel of Matthew gives a similar narrative of the visit of the women to the Sepulchre, but it omits to mention Salome, and adds materially to the marvel. It changes the young man into an angel of the Lord, whose appearance was like lightning, who descended from heaven with a mighty earthquake and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. This angel speaks to the women and tells them where Jesus had gone. And as they ran to inform the disciples, Jesus meets them, and bids them tell

¹ Mark XVI, 1-8.

² Tertullian says: "The gospel which Mark published is affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was."

his brethren to go into Galilee where they shall meet him. And they went and saw him in a certain mountain. Some of them believed and some doubted, and he commissioned them to go into all nations teaching and baptising. Matthew adds four notable statements to the story of Mark. It changes the young man into an angel; it introduces an earthquake; it brings Jesus into the garden to speak with the women; and it carries both Jesus and the disciples to Galilee for a private interview, during which some doubted. This gospel also declares that the soldiers and priests circulated the story that the disciples came in the night and stole the body of Jesus, which story was commonly believed in Jerusalem.¹ This is the testimony of the two earlier gospels, those whose origin tradition locates in Palestine. The one mentions no appearance of Jesus, the other chronicles two brief manifestations, in each of which very little was done or said.

Of the extra-Palestinian gospels priority is universally assigned to Luke. It is confessedly a compilation of earlier accounts. Jerome dates it about the middle of the second century.² It has been conjectured that the writer was a Greek Jew living in Asia Minor. It gives a detailed account of the resurrection, expanding into fifty-three verses what occupies but eight in Mark and fifteen in Matthew.

It says the women who went to the Sepulchre in the early morning were met by two men in glittering garments, who told them Jesus had risen, but did not tell them where he had gone or whether he would be seen again. The women returning told the disciples, but the disciples did not believe the story. The same day

¹ The "Acts of Pilate," a writing which was extant in the days of Justin Martyr, and was several times quoted by him, and which is thought by some modern critics to give the oldest and most reliable account of the death of Jesus, also makes the statement that the priests bribed the soldiers to spread the report that the disciples stole the body.

² In the preface to his commentary on Matthew, Jerome cites the Gospels of Basilides and Apelles as among the "many" which existed when Luke wrote. Basilides wrote about A. D. 125, and Apelles about 160. This would place Luke *after* 160 A. D. See Waite's *Christian Religion*, p. 344.

as two of the disciples were walking to Emmaus, a stranger joined them with whom they held a long conversation. In the evening as they sat at the table they recognized him as Jesus, when he mysteriously disappeared. Returning to tell the other disciples, they learn that in their absence Jesus had appeared unto Peter. And while they were talking together he suddenly stood among them. They were afraid thinking they saw a ghost. But he ate a piece of fish to convince them that he had a real body. After talking with them a little while and commanding them to remain in Jerusalem for the present, he led them out to Bethany, and there was parted from them and carried up into heaven. These three interviews are distinctly stated to have taken place during that very first day of the week on which the women discovered the empty tomb, and the final parting seems to be the natural ending of that first day evening.

This story is quite different from either of the preceding. It tells nothing of Christ's meeting the women in the garden; there is no request that the disciples follow him to Galilee. But two angels appear instead of one, and there are stories of three interviews, and of a vanishing up to heaven, of which the Palestinian gospels make no record. Very noticeable also is the positive command that the disciples do *not* go to Galilee but stay in Jerusalem.

If we supplement the story in Luke by that in the Acts of the Apostles, which is in the same strain, and is generally thought to be a later work of the same unknown author, we find that an interval of forty days is introduced between the resurrection and the ascension; that Jesus was then caught up from Mt. Olivet into a cloud; that two men in white stood by them as they gazed after him, and told them that in like manner as they had seen him go up into heaven he should hereafter return. This later version of the ascension reiterates the command that they should not depart from Jerusalem. The whole story of Luke presents a mysterious and fugitive personage, who appears and

disappears at will, and finally vanishes into thin air, or is caught up into a cloud. It entirely disagrees with the Palestinian traditions in the place, time and method of these marvellous appearances.

We turn now to the fourth gospel, a book which, whenever and wherever written, makes its first undoubted appearance upon the stage of Christian history about A. D. 180. Its legend of the resurrection differs notably from all the others. Mary Magdalene goes alone to the tomb before light on the first day morning. Finding it empty she runs to tell Peter and John. They run swiftly to the sepulchre, but find nothing, save the linen cloths in which the body was wrapped. The men go away amazed; Mary stands weeping by the open tomb. Looking into its darkness she sees two angels in white where Peter and John had seen the linen cloths. They ask why she weeps. She replies that it is for the lost body of her Master. Turning away she thinks she sees the gardener near her, and she begs him to tell her what he has done with the body. When the supposed gardener speaks she hears the loved tones of Jesus himself. He bids her tell his brethren—not to meet him in Galilee—but that he should straightway ascend to God, his Father. That same evening ten of the disciples being together, he appeared through the shut doors and breathed on them a blessing of peace. Seven days later he came in the same mysterious way to satisfy doubting Thomas. This ends his appearances at Jerusalem. But the twenty-first chapter, which reads like a later appendix, gives a detailed account of a subsequent interview when the disciples were fishing on the Lake of Galilee, in which he becomes known through a wonderful draught of fish, and holds a prolonged conversation with Peter and John.

The only other New Testament statement about the resurrection is that of Paul. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, where he is trying to prove the resurrection of the

dead from the rising of Jesus, he declares that Jesus rose the third day, that he appeared unto Peter, then to the twelve, then to more than five hundred brethren at once, after that to James, then to all of the apostles, and last of all to himself. This statement, instead of removing our difficulties, only involves us more deeply. Appearances are spoken by Paul which the gospels do not mention; he seems entirely ignorant of the defection and death of Judas; and it is hard to reconcile his assertion of an interview with more than five hundred brethren, with the statement in the Acts that the whole number of the believers at Jesus' ascension was only one hundred and twenty.

Such is the legend of the resurrection. The earliest form of the tradition says there was an open tomb and a young man sitting there, who told the frightened women that Jesus had gone to Galilee; says nothing of any appearance to anybody. In the next form the tradition includes two manifestations—one to the women in the garden, one to the disciples in Galilee—both transient, but makes no mention of any final departure. This is all we find in the two Palestinian gospels. The later foreign gospels declare that he appeared at sundry times and in divers modes and places. John says he was seen both in Jerusalem and Galilee. Luke asserts that neither he nor the disciples left Jerusalem, except to go out to Bethany, while Paul affirms that he was seen by a number of brethren more than four times greater than the whole Christian company. And in minor details the same discrepancy obtains. Now there are three women at the tomb, now two, now one. A young man becomes two young men, a mighty angel, and two white angels. One tells of an earthquake of which the others are ignorant. And so through the whole story. These contradictions, so fatal to accurate history, are the constant accompaniments of tradition and vividly illustrate the growth of the legend and its varied development in different localities. If these marvellous occurrences attracted so

little attention when they transpired that no accurate record was made of them, it was too late when the gospels were written to remedy the oversight. If there was no reliable knowledge of the facts in Palestine during the first century, there could have been none outside Palestine in the latter half of the second century.

That the grave was found empty and that Jesus went to Galilee, after which nothing was known, seems to be the first form of the legend. To this were added the circumstances of his interview with the women and with the eleven in Galilee. When the tradition went outside Palestine and wandered off among the Greek cities, it developed all the contradictory detail of Luke and John, one of which may represent the shape which the story took in one locality, the other the phase which it assumed in another locality. Paul, a Greek by birth, though a Jew by descent, who had no personal knowledge of the facts, and who visited Palestine only a few times after he became a Christian, gives his version of the general tradition. The legend grows as naturally from the first statement of the empty tomb as the oak from the acorn.

But allowing that our story of the resurrection is legendary rather than historic, there remains the stubborn fact that the early Christians believed that Jesus rose from the tomb, and was seen alive by some of his disciples, which belief Paul shared, and of the prevalence of which, within twenty-five years of Jesus' death, he is a competent witness. The historic detail may break down hopelessly, but this fact of the implicit belief of the disciples in the middle of the first century that their Lord had risen, demands explanation. Probably such an explanation cannot be satisfactorily made, but a few suggestions looking towards it may be offered.

It is not improbable that the body of Jesus disappeared from Joseph's new tomb, which, constant tradition asserts, was found empty. Without hazarding a guess concerning the disposition of it, we may say that there are very strong reasons for not believing

that it was revived by his soul. Flesh and blood are substantial; they persist in visibly occupying space. Even if, as some have suggested, Jesus' case was one of suspended animation, followed by temporary revival, his body would remain at last to be disposed of. Bodies do not melt into air, they do not vanish in clouds, and they are not so tenuous as to appear and disappear at will. And the suggestion of the Pharisees that the body was removed by his friends is less repellant than that of a fugitive after-life in Galilee.

But, if Jesus' body was not revived, his presence must be called a spiritual one and his appearances apparitions. This is precisely the tone of the legends. These sudden manifestations in shut rooms; these disguises so perfect as to deceive intimate friends; these departures as mysterious and inexplicable as the comings; this doubtful and uncertain recognition by some of the apostles—all have a hazy, immaterial look. Paul's testimony favors this idea. He places the appearances to others on the same basis as the appearance to himself. But that appearance is generally identified with the vision on the road to Damascus. Paul was a man who saw visions, and whether in the body or out of the body, whether the visions were subjective or objective, he could not tell. Perhaps the same visions came to the excited minds of the other disciples, as they have come to excited and overstrained minds all over the world before and since; and these visions, combined with the disappearance of the body and a great willingness to believe, may have satisfied them that Jesus had risen from the dead, and formed the foundation for the subsequent legends. Doubtless the tendency to see visions was increased by the theological necessity which early obtained for a risen Master. The disciples believed that Jesus was the coming Messiah. But Messiah was to reign in glory. Jesus had died in shame. How could he reign except he came a second time on earth? How could he come in triumph unless he had broken

the bonds of death, escaped the underworld and ascended up on high? The resurrection was necessary to the second coming, and the expectation of the one would predispose excited minds to visions which would substantiate the other.

Whether these visions were subjective or objective ; whether they arose from disordered mental action, or were caused by some actual presence ; whether the disciples saw a spirit form or only thought they saw one, are questions which each will answer in accordance with his own philosophy and mental constitution. If there are spirits outside flesh, there would seem to be no insuperable impossibility to their manifesting their presence. Whether such manifestation has occurred is a question of the sufficiency of evidence. Paul had no doubt about it. He said he saw Jesus. Our acceptance or rejection of his testimony will perhaps depend upon whether we most readily believe in mental hallucination or in spiritual presence. And it is quite possible to have a philosophy which recognizes no impassable barrier to spirit manifestations, combined with an historic sense which cannot accept the legendary evidence of such manifestations as valid.

THE HEBREW MESSIAH.

The Jews were looking for the coming of a Messiah who was to restore the glory of Jerusalem and make the religion of Israel honored through the world. This anticipation sprang out of the peculiar character of Hebraism. The moral foundation of that faith was profoundly simple. If the people obeyed Jehovah peace and prosperity would follow, their days should be long in the land, it should go well with them and with their children after them, and they should flourish in the land which the Lord had given them for ever. If they disobeyed Jehovah, He would destroy them and bring them to nought, would scatter them among all nations, would punish them so that their very lives should hang in doubt before their eyes. Consequently, when national disaster and disruption came they were ascribed to the disobedience of the people. They suffered because they had sinned against the Lord their God. And they were assured that if they would return to Jehovah he would deliver them, would send them a leader who would save them from their distresses, rescue them from their captivities, and bring them back to their own land in triumph. This is the burden of the writings of Ezekiel and the Pseudo-Isaiah. And so far as any fulfilment of their prophecies was possible it came in the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. Then the people returned to their own land with rejoicing and built again the walls of Zion.

But the triumph was only temporary; clouds soon obscured the sun of prosperity, and each new trouble brought fresh anticipation of some grand deliverance. And when at last such deliverance had become impossible by any human arm, the faith in a

celestial redeemer sprang up and grew strong. These disappointments, these oppressions would not continue. Jehovah would not break faith with his loyal people. As He had afflicted them for their recreancy, so would He bless their fidelity. Messiah would come and set up his eternal kingdom. All the oppressors would be overthrown, the true Israelites would possess the earth, and the reign of lasting peace begin.

The Messianic hope was born out of the Hebrew's prolonged experience of adversity. It is the legitimate offspring of the faith that Jehovah rewards loyalty by prosperity, and punishes disloyalty with disaster. As He had punished, so He would reward. He would not leave those in trouble who cried unto Him night and day. He would rescue His faithful ones. If not by a human champion, then by a divinely commissioned and anointed One the kingdom would be restored to Israel.

No argument is needed to show that Jesus did not meet the Messianic expectation of the Jewish people. He did not establish either their State or their religion. Judea is a wilderness, and the grand, old Hebrew faith is still everywhere spoken against. Even the dream of future restoration so long fondly cherished is dying out of the heart of the race. No victorious prince of the house of David was hidden under the humble garb of the Nazarene teacher. Notwithstanding his disciples' after-faith he was not the fulfilment of his nation's hope.

Doubtless the later Hebrews were mistaken in their interpretation of their own scriptures. They did not realize that the events to which those scriptures referred had already transpired, that the redeemer had already come, the victories had been won and the triumphs celebrated. The promises had been fulfilled, not indeed in all their poetic grandeur but with all the fulfilment possible to them. The brief day of glory was already past, and the redness of that eastern sky towards which they were so expectantly looking, was not the bow of hope, but the stormy presage of disaster. What-

ever national prosperity might have seemed possible when Ezra rebuilt Jerusalem, or when the Maccabees freed it from Syrian oppression, rescue from vassalage to almighty Rome was hopeless. No inspired rhapsody of ancient seer could shatter her solid legions or turn back the flight of her victorious eagles. To apply the glad, exultant words of the great prophet of the returning captivity to this later day, and to these changed conditions, was fatally misleading.

Was it not equally misleading to apply them to Jesus? It is hard to avoid the conviction that the speech of the prophets, so far as it has any definiteness, concerns their own times and affairs. They have a large hope of a grand, good time coming to the Hebrew people, which they do not always locate, but when they refer to particular persons and events, it is to contemporaneous persons and events, not to those of half a dozen centuries later. We misread and misinterpret them when we go to them for predictions of the future, instead of knowledge of, and opinions about, current events. There is not a single word in the Old Testament which has any direct, conscious reference to Jesus, none which would have ever been regarded as a prophecy of him, if his disciples, sharing the general Jewish hope and mistake, had not thought it necessary to prove him to be the expected Messiah. Many of the passages usually quoted have no Messianic significance whatever, and the few which have seeming relevance are only indistinct expectation or hope of the coming Prince and Leader to redeem Israel, which hope Jesus did not fulfil. Certain psalms are called Messianic, but the only way of making them Messianic is by supposing that the writers meant two things at the same time, that while they were apparently glorifying the reigning king, they were really foretelling the future Messiah. This is a most vicious mode of interpretation, which, once entered upon, can affix the wildest meaning to the commonest sayings, and transform flights of Oriental poetry into anything the commenta-

tor pleases, and of which the legitimate result is the fantastic extravagance of the Talmud. These old writers knew what they were doing. They celebrated their own times in their own words and were not sharply predicting the future. It is a grievous wrong to put into their speech ideas born of later centuries. The same may be said of the so called Messianic prophecies in Isaiah, Daniel and Zechariah. They refer to events of their own day; they describe the near glory which is coming to Jerusalem; they speak of living individuals, some child just born, some prince like Hezekiah, some king like Cyrus, some leader like Judas Maccabeus. There is no passage in the Old Testament which gives unmistakable evidence that the writer was clearly contemplating the remote future, much less that he had in view such a person as Jesus.

But although there are no prophecies which justify the Hebrew Messianic hope, although Jesus did not fulfil that hope in any particular, and although there is no prediction of any such person as Jesus in the Old Testament, yet within half a century after his death his disciples had crystallized the old hope about him, and had wrested the words of ancient writers into some kind of application to him. They precipitated the national expectation of the coming Messiah upon one who neither in life or death fulfilled it, and to confirm their own faith, and, if possible, convince their sceptical countrymen, they mis-quoted their sacred books. A careful examination of the passages cited in the New Testament as prophecies of Jesus, will show that they have no original application to him, and that they afford only a frequent enough parallelism between some word of prophet or poet and an event in his life. He fulfils the prophet by giving a new illustration of an ancient saying, which had no original reference to him. Indeed it is more than possible that some of the traditions about Jesus may have arisen through unwise attempts to create a correspondence between his life and these misunderstood sayings.

Whether Jesus himself had any feeling that he might possibly be in some sense the fulfilment of his nation's hope, will remain a disputed question. There is no evidence that he ever cherished any purpose of restoring "the kingdom to Israel." Hence he could not have expected to fulfil the dream of the Hebrew zealot. Whether he thought he was the one whom, according to the scribes and doctors of the law, the prophets foretold, whether he applied their sayings in some ideal way to his mission, who shall tell? His friends certainly did this after his death. They clothed him with the Messianic garment; did he consciously put them on? Is the Messianic coloring which the gospels impart to his life its true tint, or is it a roseate halo thrown around him by the reverence of later disciples? It is possible that Jesus partaking in the common hope of his countrymen, realizing how it had failed and must fail as a political aspiration, felt that it might be fulfilled as a religious renovation, and felt also that he might be destined in the providence of God to give it that fulfilment. But it seems more probable that his noble life, his powerful word, his grand, tragic death, caused his followers to crown him with the traditional, Messianic glory which he was far too modest to claim.

The Messianic hope was a Hebrew dream, born of their many oppressions, which never has been and never could be realized. When the expectation was at its highest Jesus came, tinged with it perhaps, but superior to it, seeking not to found a political kingdom but to teach religion, to bring the ideal kingdom of God on earth. He who fulfilled in no respect this Messianic hope became at length to his disciples, to the Christian world, the Messianic ideal. Into the niche which stood vacant his statue was placed, and the world which was waiting for something to worship, bowed in reverence. The old hope gives way before a larger and grander expectation. The glory of Israel does not shine, but a blessing to mankind draws near. The sceptre departs

from Zion, but there is a new coming of the kingdom of God. The form fades away but there remains a fact greater than all forms. Prophecies fail but mankind is blessed. A grand manhood more glorious than any Messiahship wins the world's trust and love.

WONDERFUL WORKS.

The gospel legend ascribes many wonderful works to Jesus. It was natural that the growing reverence of his followers should express itself in this manner. He would have been an exception among the great religious teachers of antiquity, if traditions of miracle had not gathered about him. And when belief in his Messiahship became prevalent, the power to do wonderful works was a necessary proof of his identity and authentication of his mission. In an age which was crowded with portents in which even the wisest believed, the greatest of miracles would be that none should be attributed to Jesus. It is hardly conceivable that a story of Jesus could get itself told in Palestine in the first century with no marvel in it. The atmosphere of the age was full of wonder, and whatever comes out of it must be tinged therewith. To dissect this miracle story, to remove the accretions of time and the exaggerations of fancy, and to lay bare the exact fact in each reputed marvel is an obvious impossibility. Those who attempt it are only putting their own imaginings in the place of the imaginings of the earlier time. But while a detailed examination of special cases would be profitless, there are perhaps a few general suggestions which may throw some light into the heart of the matter.

Two definitions may be given of the miracle. According to one a miracle is a direct interference with the laws and processes of nature by divine power. It is an event which could not have occurred by any action of natural forces, but which must have had supernatural origin. These supernatural facts are the result of the direct action or influence of Deity, and are an unimpeach-

able evidence that the person through whom they are manifest is either God or his authorized and accredited agent.

To this idea of miracles two serious objections present themselves. First, the improbability, not to say impossibility, of any such meddling with the regular sequence of nature. In ages when the world was considered a plaything of Deity, in which He acted capriciously, doing whatever His wisdom or His whim prompted, it was very easy to imagine His intermittent interference with affairs; but with our growing knowledge of the laws and forces which govern not only this planet but the boundless universe, of the uniformity of their action, and of the results which would arise from their suspension, the supposition that they have been violated to furnish credentials even to the holiest teacher, or to reveal to men the highest moral truth, becomes incredible. Deity does not act in that way. He does not transgress one law to convince men that they ought to keep another. The Infinite Life of the universe, in whose incomprehensible Being all things live, does not busy Himself healing a few sick folk, blasting fig trees, or turning water into wine. Only a tenth-rate divinity would be thus employed.

The second objection to this idea of miracles is the difficulty, if not impossibility, of its proof. For the chances that human knowledge is imperfect, human observation is incorrect, or human testimony is unreliable, are always much greater than those that the steady methods of nature have been changed. Locke says: "It is harder to believe that God should alter or put out of its ordinary course some phenomena of the great world for once, and make things act contrary to their ordinary rule purposely, than to believe that this is some mistake or fallacy or natural effect of which we know not the cause, let it look ever so strange." To convince men that a law of nature has been divinely set aside a greater miracle must be performed in the human mind. An evidence of truth is offered which is harder to substantiate and

believe than the truth itself. It is easier to convince men of the truth of Jesus' teachings than it is to convince them that God miraculously interrupted the order of nature to attest that truth. The man must support the miracle—not the miracle the man. This is no modern thought. Even in Galilee the people were astonished at the doctrine rather than at the deeds. The mighty works did not win them. Miracle working was too common. Every Simon Magus could perform his marvels. In fact, the mass of the people was not won at all, but remained incredulous to the end. If God concentrated his power in Judea to give supernatural credentials to Jesus, the greatest miracle of all is that He should have met with so small success, that the attempt so largely failed, leaving the Jewish people unconvinced.

The other definition of miracle is that it is a fact not understood; one which occurs in apparent variance with the common methods of nature, but in perfect accord with its more subtle and occult forces, as the growth of a tree is contrary to the universal law of gravitation, but in harmony with the mysterious forces of life, as the transmission of sound through the telephone, however inexplicable it may seem by all the laws of atmospheric motion, is yet in entire conformity with those of electrical vibration. Assuming that man is subject to the influence of other forces than those of growth and decay, it is not difficult to understand how any action of these higher and unknown powers would be regarded and reported by the multitude as a miracle; and how the individual, through whom these mysterious forces are manifest, not recognizing their source or comprehending their law, might share in the opinion of the multitude. The supernatural part of such wonder working, if any one thinks it necessary to assume the supernatural, is the gift of knowledge or of nature, whereby the individual is able to use or to be used by this higher force. And the authentication which it would give to intellectual or moral teaching is based upon the assumption that no one could

do such works unless God was with him, giving him infallible enlightenment as well as inexplicable power.

However we may doubt the validity of the corollaries drawn therefrom, there are no insuperable objections to this idea of miracle. There are deep mysteries in man yet unsolved. There are laws in his nature that have not been formulated; forces of which the origin and method of action are little understood. Hence, when so-called miraculous events are reported, the first question is of the validity of the testimony—is there evidence competent to prove that they actually occurred? If the testimony is convincing, if a clear idea, free from misrepresentation and exaggeration, can be gained of the exact event, then its cause is sought. Is it explicable by any known law of human nature? If not, then supernatural interference may be assumed, or ignorance confessed and judgment held in suspense waiting for some new insight into the mysterious powers of man.

Allowing the possibility of the performance by Jesus of wonderful works through some occult power, is there adequate proof that he actually had such power, that he comprehended the higher laws and availed himself of their forces, or that he was aided therein by special supernatural enlightenment? It is often assumed that there is abundant evidence that the miracles of Jesus are unique and isolated, and therefore they attest the divineness of his character and teaching. The assumption has very slight foundation. All antiquity is full of miracle. The Hebrew traditions from Genesis to Maccabees abound with them. Egyptian, Indian, Persian, Greek and Roman legends are full of marvels, some of them of the most stupendous character. The atmosphere of the past is thick with prodigy. With modern ideas and habits of thought it is impossible to enter fully into the state of mind of that ancient world in respect to the supernatural. To it miracle in some form was a common occurrence. Gracious divinities were frequent visitors. Innumerable

angels or demons thronged on every side. They intermeddled constantly in human affairs. That a man could perform wonders was no certain evidence that he was a saint ; it might only prove that he was a powerful wizard. God might work through him or the devil might help him. Either hypothesis would explain the marvel. The character of the man alone could determine which was the correct one.

The New Testament recognizes this prevalence of marvels. With all its tendency to idealize Jesus it never assumes that his powers are monopolies. It admits that the children of the Pharisees cast out devils, states that the disciples found those casting out devils who did not follow Jesus, that they rejoiced because they could heal diseases through his name, and even devils were subject to them, and asserts that Jesus gave all power to his friends who should do greater works than he.¹ It tells us also that after Jesus' death his disciples could cure all manner of diseases, that handkerchiefs which they had touched healed the sick, that even their shadows falling on the afflicted could restore health.² It affirms that Paul gave life to the dead, and declares that Peter killed Annanias and Sapphira with a word.³ And if we accept the testimony of those who have transmitted the New Testament legends to us, we are forced to admit that this wonder working power has been constant in the world. Justin Martyr testifies very positively to the existence of miracles in the middle of the second century, including the raising of the dead.⁴ Irenæus, at the close of that century, affirms that "all disciples of Jesus wrought miracles in his name; some cast out devils; others healed the sick; even the dead had been raised and lived afterwards many years."⁵ Origen says: "I myself have seen

¹ John XIV, 12.

² Acts V, 15; XIX, 12.

³ Acts V, 1-10; XX, 9-12.

⁴ Lecky's *History of Religion*, I, 168.

⁵ *Adv. Her.* II, 31, 32.

many difficult cases healed, loss of senses, madness and innumerable other evils which neither men nor devils could cure."¹ Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, turned water into oil by prayer.² Augustine asserts that a single relic in his diocese of Hippo wrought upward of seventy miracles in two years, and a still greater number in a neighboring province. In his catalogue of those miracles he numbers five cases of resurrection from the dead.³ Each of the fathers has his tale of marvel, for the veracity of which he vouches. The opponents of Christianity admitted the wonders, declaring that they were performed through demons, and they claimed for Greek sages the same power. Celsus mentions several noted miracle workers.⁴ Lucian, the satirist, wrote an account of Alexander Abnotichus, whom he visited. He declared that "the air was full of miracles, the sick were healed, and the dead raised to life."⁵ Appollonius of Tyana, who lived in the first century, and whose life was written by one of his companions, is reported to have been a famous miracle worker, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind and raising the dead.⁶ Nor did miracles cease with the early centuries. So far as the evidence goes, the same wonders have been common in the church in all the ages. The Roman Church has canonized more than twenty-five thousand saints, all of whom were proved, in the ecclesiastical way, to have possessed the power of working miracles. Middleton, in the preface to his *Free Inquiry*, writes: "As far as the church historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history so constantly, explicitly and unanimously confirmed by them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages, from the earliest fathers down to the time of the Reforma-

¹ *Cont. Celsus*, III, 24.

² Waite's *Christian Religion*, 121.

³ Lecky's *History of Religion*, 178, n.

⁴ Esculapius, Aristias and Cleomedes.

⁵ Waite's *Christian Religion*, 114.

⁶ *Ibid*, 90.

tion."¹ And, we may add, in the Catholic Church to the present day.

This brief historical survey of miracles suggests one of two conclusions. If we trust tradition at all, this wonder-making power, whatever it is, is nothing unique or exclusive, but has been manifest in the church and in the world in all ages. If we reject tradition, our disbelief of its testimony throws grave doubt over the legends of the gospels. For we receive the gospels at the hands of these same fathers of the second century, they came into their present shape under the forming influence of that century, and if we cannot trust these fathers when they testify of what they saw, how can we trust them when they assure us of the genuineness of the wonders which some one else saw? If they consciously or ignorantly manufactured the marvels of their own time, would not the temptation be greater and the restraints less to magnify the miracle stories of past generations? If we reject their positive assertions concerning events with which they profess to be familiar, how can we feel certain of the traditions which they say were handed down to them from a former age? If men do not tell the truth about what happens under their own eyes, will they be apt to report the marvels of other days without exaggeration?

Whatever we may think about the endowment of humanity with wonder-working power, we can hardly accept any of the legends thereof, even the gospel ones, as strictly historic. When we consider the length of time during which these legends floated in the magnifying and distorting air of tradition, the irresponsible way in which they drifted into their present shape, the characteristic greed of the marvellous, and the literary looseness of the ancient worthies from whose hands we receive them more than a century after Jesus' death, the conviction can hardly be avoided that there is a very small probability of our possessing

¹ Preface to *Free Inquiry*.

a reliable and unexaggerated account of his wonderful works. The men who told such marvellous stories about their own times, would not miss a favorable opportunity of magnifying the deeds of him whom they had already learned to regard as the heaven-descended Son of God. If there was no conscious embellishment of the narrative—which is hardly supposable in an age so wanting in sense of historic truth as this second century, in the midst of which our gospels appear, is known to have been—the general tendency of idealizing tradition could not fail to enlarge and distort any real facts before they were condensed into that form in which they float out of the dark mist of uncertainty into the clear light of history. We can give small credit to the men of that age for exact observation; we know how ready they were to seek the supernatural cause of every remarkable event, how entirely they believed in supernal and infernal interference, how little their traditions regarded the truth of history, and hence it is impossible to believe that they have transmitted an entirely trustworthy account of occurrences so peculiarly liable to exaggeration, especially when we find them telling wildest tales of similar events, which they affirm happened under their own observation.

Notwithstanding all the uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness of the evidence, it would, however, seem that there is some little-understood force in human nature whose action lies upon the border line of the marvellous. But this power is an upreaching of humanity, not a descent of Deity. Perhaps it has been in the world through ages, and has lain at the basis of the apparent miracles that have gathered around all faiths. Fully as we may recognize the superstition and imposture which always, in all ages, centers around so-called manifestations of the supernatural, it is hard to believe that it is all superstition and imposture; that there is no fire behind all the smoke; no true power which the pretenders are trying to imitate. It is hardly philosophic to

maintain that because there is much confessed imposture and credulity there is no truth behind; that there is no fact at the bottom of this universal experience of mankind. We cannot fathom the mysteries of human experience, or entirely separate truth from hallucination; but there are facts which seem to stand the test of severest examination, whose law we are far from grasping, are psychological powers which, though manifest but seldom, do nevertheless exist, perhaps in some measure in all, but in a large degree in rare and peculiar persons. And in the presence of these persons remarkable and mysterious events do sometimes occur. It probably has been so in all ages and is so still.

Jesus may have possessed such power, through which he was able to do works which seemed to the ignorant multitude entirely supernatural. His own mental exaltation would intensify its action; the strong faith of the people afforded the finest field for its exercise (where they had little faith he could do few works)¹; while their ignorance magnified the marvel into miracle. Perhaps he himself, not understanding the power of which he was conscious, may have ascribed to the special action of Deity what was the natural outcome of his own finely-organized nature. We still fail to understand that power in him or in others. There seems, however, a growing faith that it is not a special supernatural endowment, but a rare and wonderful faculty of the soul, which may sometime be fully comprehended, and become the frequent possession of mankind.

¹ Matt. XIII., 58.

THE MANLINESS OF JESUS.

A candid reader of the gospels is impressed with the conviction that the picture they present of Jesus is that of a right manly man. He was strongly, intensely human. He had fine human instincts, deep human sympathies, strong human desires, high human aspirations. The atmosphere of upright, downright, outright manhood is all about him. There is nothing in him unmanly or ignoble, nothing weak or wavering, everything is strong, firm and true. He is always broad, free and well-balanced. Doubtless he was as prompt in action as he was clear in thought; as faithful to his friends as he was charitable to his enemies.

What integrity was in him—integrity not only of word and act, but of thought, feeling and instinct! His soul is as clear as the daylight. It is impossible to think of him as concealing any truth or consciously countenancing any wrong. What fine moral sense he possessed! How surely he discerned the error of the ancient teaching. He is not dazzled by glitter of high place, misled by the authority of the priests, or overawed by reverence for what had been said in the “old time.” His clear eye saw the right and the wrong, and his steady voice condemned the wrong, even if Moses and the prophets stood its sponsors. And how earnest he was. How hard he tried to reach priest and people. How enthusiastically he preached his gospel of the kingdom. Who was ever more devoted to his work? Who ever showed greater and more perfect self-sacrifice?

How simple and true he is in thought and speech! There is no ostentation or parade. His word drops right down to the

bottom of things as unconsciously as a little child's word. He never labors for his thought, but it comes naturally, as water bubbles from a spring, out of a depth and fullness which might give us infinitely more. We never feel that he is exhausted, but only think how little we have of the wisdom and truth which was in him. Yet how his words went beyond the world. In eighteen centuries it has not begun to reach them. They condemn us as sharply as they did scribes and Pharisees.

How strong and brave he is! He is all alone, but he knows no fear. He speaks the truth right on, though priests rage and mobs take up stones to stone him. He does not shrink in the last trial, when he finds that the cup may not pass from him. His serenity is unruffled in Caiaphas' palace or Pilate's judgment hall. When his friends were fearful and trembling, he quieted and comforted them. When they all forsook him, he pitied rather than feared, and was not alone, for God was with him. What fine spiritual balance and self-poise! Not because he strove after equanimity or struggled for firmness, but because he was sincerity and truth in every part of his being. His feet were on the eternal rock and he could not waver. The inlet of his life had wide communication with the infinite sea, and he partook of its mighty calm. But his courage was not that of stoical indifference. It was that of one who had a work to accomplish, with which no obstacles must interfere. Though the flesh might shrink, the spirit would blench at no crosses which stood in the way.

With all his courage and endurance, how he showed the brave man's tenderness and pity! He comforted his disciples, mourned over his countrymen, prayed for his enemies. What rare combination of sweetness and strength! He had a woman's or a child's longing for sympathy and love. He felt all the loneliness of his position; felt that no one understood him; felt that even his favorite disciples did not know "what manner of spirit they were

of." He has a deep desire to be lovingly remembered. How lonely and sad are the words: "Now I go away and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" And these others, spoken to the sleepy disciples in Gethsemane: "Could you not watch with me one hour?" A very loving and tender heart beat in that calm, brave breast. It was not stoical indifference, but high courage and deep trust which bore him so grandly through his night of trial and day of death.

And he crowns his noble manhood with self-forgetfulness and self-devotion. He never seeks his own welfare. He is consecrated to truth and to the welfare of his fellowmen. He was so anxious to save others that he never thought of saving himself. He served with the most complete self-devotion, and through that grand service he became a Savior to mankind. Is there anything lacking in this perfect manhood? Human nature, a plant of slower growth than any aloe tree, which counts its years by ages, blossomed in him, and the world has looked on in wonder. How it happened that there in Palestine such a soul was born into the flesh it is as impossible to explain as it is to tell how Shakespeare was born in England or Plato in Greece; but thus it did happen. In him true manliness found such an expression that no one has ever shown a flaw therein. He stands as the finest type of humanity; has stood so for centuries; will stand so for centuries yet to come. Humanity looks back to him, if not in worship, yet in admiration and love.

Doubtless there is truth in the suggestion which is sometimes made, that Jesus is the type of manliness, because the world embodies in him its ideal; because its imagination clothes him with all possible perfection, and hence can "find no fault in him." For eighteen hundred years the Christian world has incarnated in him its highest conceptions of worth, beauty and grandeur. It has surrounded his head with its brightest aureola. It has put its noblest thought into his speech. It has breathed its loftiest

aspirations through his lips. It has made him the reality of its purest dreams. The Jesus of to-day is not only him of Nazareth, but he is also humanity's divine ideal, which floats ever before it, rising higher and higher as humanity gains a deeper consciousness of its own power and destiny, growing grander and more glorious as humanity grows out of its ignorance and imperfection, and enters into larger and more celestial life.

Doubtless Jesus is clothed with this gracious, uplifting idealism. But, so far as possible, we may forget all this and go back to the fragmentary tradition, and although the story is so broken and incomplete, the sterling manhood is still seen through it, and stands out in divine nobility as it is freed from the exaggerations and fancies with which a credulous reverence has surrounded it. What a wonderful personality that must have been which could call forth such love and adoration, which could attract, impress and hold men with such force in so brief a life! What a manhood, which could tower so high and shine so bright that the amazed centuries mistake it for godhood! Allow every claim for the uncertainty of the record, yet what a soul that must have been which could thus project itself into and make itself permanent with, humanity; could thus assume and keep the leadership of the world's most intelligent races, walking before them with so grand and lofty a step.

This fine strong manliness of Jesus does not necessarily compel the idea that he never in all his life made any moral or mental mistakes. Manhood is not infallibility. It does not give its possessor supernatural vision or free him from the limitations of his age. Jesus was born into the intellectual life of his time and country. His knowledge was limited by its horizon. He did not know all the sciences and the arts of modern days. Doubtless he did not know much with which the Greek scholars of his own time were familiar. He was not versed in their philosophies or theogonies. In all these things he was the unlearned Hebrew

artizan, using Hebrew phrases, putting his thought into Hebrew forms. But we find in him no moral blemish. Some of his standards of practical action may be different from ours, but the spirit of all his life is above reproach. There is no stain upon his perfect purity. That strong rebuke of the Pharisees, which is sometimes cited as a lapse from the serene temper of the ideal, ennobles rather than belittles him. It shows that he was outright as well as upright, strong as well as pure; shows that he was not only sensitive to evil, but had a certain robust, healthy holiness which rejected meanness and baseness swiftly and vehemently; shows that he was not weak and effeminate, but had that fine capacity of moral indignation which belongs to all grand souls.

In matters of moral insight, of spiritual fact, his intuition, or inspiration, seems perfect. It leaps quick and sure to the bottom. He saw the truth; he told what he saw, and the world has verified his vision. This moral and spiritual insight is the rarest outcome of his grand, pure manhood. It is the fine skill and power of the strong hand. It is the true, keen vision of the clear eye. It is the ultimate result, the crowning glory, of all. Among the sages of other lands we may find wider knowledge, loftier intellectual speculations, greater skill in abstract discussion, but nowhere do we discover such a sure moral sense, such unwavering spiritual insight, such profound religious inspiration. Others lead the world in science, in art, in philosophy, but in morals and religion the prophet of Nazareth is still its revered teacher. The growth of the ages has not outgrown him; the progress of the ages has not left him behind.

With all our analysis how far we fall short of catching the fine secret of power. We meditate upon the manhood of Jesus; we dwell upon his characteristics; but we do not explain him or his influence. There is an indefinable something which moulds characteristics into personality. It is this personality, this wondrous embodiment of living, divine force which moves the world. We

say this power results from this or that ; our explanation is inadequate ; we do not hit the secret. Power cannot be explained. It is the infinite life coming into finite lives ; it is God manifest in the flesh ; and it leads and recreates the world.

We cannot explain this personal power by which Jesus has impressed himself so forcibly upon the world that what is holiest still bears his name ; but we cannot go far wrong in saying that it resulted somehow from his perfect manhood. If man is a child of God, the most perfect man is nearest the eternal Father, and through the open avenues of his soul will have sweeping the fullest tides of infinite life. Spirit is one. Humanity and divinity have in it a common term. Whoso has the most humanity has the most divinity also. Jesus was pre-eminently son of God, because he was pre-eminently son of man. As the highest type of humanity he was the noblest embodiment of divinity. A pure, manly life is the life nearest God. It has the truest insight and the deepest revelations. When our souls are sound and clear they reflect the infinite soul, which overreaches us as the eternal sky overarches the dewdrop.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

Every great teacher has his leading principle, his dominant idea, which runs through his teaching and distinguishes it. Zoroaster emphasized the universal conflict between good and evil, and the necessity of fighting on the side of the good. The Mosaic law gives prominence to the idea that obedience to Jehovah will be accompanied by peace and prosperity. Buddha taught self-renunciation as the true path to Nirvana. The great word of Jesus was perfection, human perfection—not in Nirvana or in Paradise, but here in this world, amid all these earthly conditions—the perfect thought of love and kindliness, the perfect life of reciprocity and helpfulness. “Love God and thy neighbor,” “Do unto others as ye would they should do to you,” in thus feeling and acting, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Who that is familiar with the gospels does not recognize these as their profound underlying ideas, often contradicting the narrower thought of some special dogmatic utterance?

John came—“The voice of one crying in the wilderness”—saying to rough Judean soldiers, to sceptical-sneering Sadducees, to corrupt priests and scribes, and to the sordid, debased peasantry, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When the dungeon silenced John’s voice, Jesus took up the message, which he phrased in John’s old way as the “Gospel of the kingdom of God.” What John meant by his “kingdom,” whether he was expecting some external manifestation, with power and great glory, which should surprise Judea into grandeur, and the radiance whereof should shine out upon an astonished world, none

can distinctly decide. The report of his teaching is too fragmentary, and the remaining fragments have been too obviously shaped by later hands into some semblance of Messianic prediction to be entirely trustworthy. Among the Jews John seems to have made a profound personal impression, while later Christians regarded him as only a stepping stone to Jesus.

But Jesus leaves us in no doubt what the "Gospel of the kingdom" which he preaches, means. His kingdom is not of this world. It has no political pretensions. It will not shine with ritualistic splendor, nor come with any sudden wide-flashing Messianic magnificence. It will be God in the world,—not revealed by any overthrow of dynasties or elevation of unknown prophets by mysterious supernatural power to univesal leadership—but manifested in human hearts, by juster thoughts, by purer desires, by more helpful lives, by a more tender trust in that eternal Providence which is over all blessed for evermore. His gospel of the kingdom is a gospel of God with us, of an infinite life and love which was not far removed and inaccessible, which did not hide itself behind some temple veil or in some holy of holies, needing to be placated by sacrifice and approached with terror, but which filled the world with a cheering, helpful presence, in which all men lived and moved and had their being, and wherein all could feel that they were children in a Father's house and sure of a Father's blessing. Jesus felt this eternal presence of the Father. He lived in it as one lives in air and sunshine. It was his constant inspiration, comfort and strength. This kingdom of God, which he felt in his soul, this consciousness of a great, loving, tender Presence and Providence, when it came into the hearts of men, would soothe all their unrest, would harmonize all their differences, would put the eternal rock under doubtful feet, would give anxious, wounded minds healing and peace. His insight was sure. The true rest and welfare of man lie, and evermore will lie, in this obedience to eternal

law, in this confident trust in the eternal Presence. This is the most blessed gospel possible to a struggling humanity; but amid the warfare of creeds and dogmas, amid the struggle for gain and the wild clash of conflicting interests, how slowly the feeling of it has spread abroad in men's hearts. Though this gospel of the kingdom has been preached these many centuries, how far it still is from any large and fitting realization. Yet whenever realized in any, however slight, degree, how completely it justifies the great teacher's faith and hope.

A kingdom not of externality but of internality, a reign not of power but of righteousness, which was to come, not through the downfall of dynasties but through the uplifting of human lives, through peace and good will among men, through each man seeking his neighbor's welfare as his own, this was the kingdom for which Jesus hoped. And the "good news" he had to tell, the "gospel" he had to preach, was that this kingdom did not lie away in the distant future, was not waiting for some marvellous manifestation in the heaven above or in the earth beneath, but was already *here*, was already coming in every heart that was seeking patiently and faithfully to do the eternal right in a spirit of kindness and with some trustful uplook towards the Infinite Fatherliness. The kingdom "cometh not with observation." The men who say "Lo! here" and "Lo! there," who rush after this prophet and that Messiah will not find it. But the righteous souls feel that kingdom's coming; the pure-hearted see it; the humble and trustful inherit its blessing; the pitiful and loving have entered therein. These do not wait for unfulfilled promises or deferred hopes. Already the new life is within. The light has risen upon them; they see its brightness; they live in its glory; and they know that their "sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself," for the everlasting day has dawned and the life which abideth forever."

And this kingdom of character, of manhood and womanhood, of life lived joyously in the Eternal Presence, which has already begun to come in the world, is to spread and conquer—not by armies or miracles, or manifestation of angels or proclamation of priesthoods—but by growth, by silently stealing from heart to heart, till mankind everywhere learns to know the Father, to keep the eternal law and to walk in the eternal light. As the seed drops down into the soil and quietly germinates, sending up its small green shoot which, drawing sustenance from earth and air, rises high and spreads wide, until the greatest of all trees stands with broad sheltering branches, wherein the fowls of the air do lodge, so the kingdom of God roots itself in the unseen heart of the world and silently grows, ever more fruitful and far reaching, till the nations rest in its beneficent shade. Such growth cannot be forced by decree of the governor, or vote of the Sanhedrin, or clamor of the multitude. As the leaven goes into the meal and works internally from particle to particle, until the whole is changed, so must the new life penetrate and recreate society. It must go from individual heart to individual heart, stimulating new feelings, creating fresh convictions, giving vision of grander realities. It will reach its fruition when the individual soul is holy, and the life of the world becomes loving and helpful.

As the seed grows up into the goodly tree because the soil is favoring; as the leaven changes the meal because the meal has affinity for leaven, so this gospel of the present God and the righteous life, of the loving heart and the helping hand, will spread among men because it finds in them a natural soil in which to take root; because the soul has affinity for these grand ideas, and when brought in contact with them incorporates them into itself. Jesus believed in humanity, not only in the mass, but individually. He appealed confidently to man's

reason, to his sense of justice, to his tenderness, to his love of right, to his consciousness of God. He never distrusts human nature, never doubts its capacity to appreciate truth, to understand and to love virtue. His whole teaching aims, not to import something from without, but to stimulate the life within until it becomes divine.

The humblest individual was sacred in his sight, more sacred than temple, ritual or law. Temple, ritual and law were made for man, were to serve him, to assist in strengthening and beautifying his life. When they failed of this they became of no value. When they were hindrances, when they grew into obstacles and oppressions, they were to be disregarded, and those who would enforce them must be withstood and condemned. Jesus had a Hebrew's respect for "the law and the prophets," but when they were so interpreted as to become a burden he denounced the interpretation and the interpreters, and insisted that the welfare, even the physical welfare, of one of God's little ones, was of more importance than commandments and traditions. "It hath been said of old time" did not restrain him when even the lowliest was to be helped and healed. "Man is more than constitutions," says our poet, and therein gives in modern phrase the thought and feeling of Jesus. Man is the supremest thing in the world. He is eternal while the world may pass away. Hence, what would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose himself? Man is a child of God, with a nature so noble, so lofty in aspiration, so far-reaching in capacity, that it is kin to the divine. Let men perfect themselves and they win eternal life. Let humanity perfect itself and the kingdom of God has come. And it is not only an ideal humanity which inspires his reverence, but real men and women, and little children, with all their faults and failings. These are God's children; these have eternal destiny; these are worth living for and worth dying for. Even the

wandering sheep which has gone astray and bruised itself sorely in the mountains, the good shepherd prizes so highly that he goes painfully searching till he finds it and brings it back in his bosom.

This teaching has been in the world these eighteen hundred and fifty years, and has perhaps grown a little trite and common place. But what a wonderful word it was to be spoken in the heart of that old Roman empire, with its absolute indifference to humanity, which it crushed out by whole provinces and nations, with its recognition of the individual only as an infinitesimal fraction of the State, his only right and duty to promote the welfare of the commonwealth, either by living or dying as the Emperor might require. The rights of man as God's child—more eternal than the world, more sacred than temple and shrine—what a ray of divine light is this flashing out of those dark, stormy centuries! What a prophetic voice of peace and hope, sounding so soft and clear above their crashing tumults! Some one has named Jesus the first great democrat: does not this teaching of the integrity of human nature, of the innate dignity, the inestimable worth and the inalienable rights of man, constitute the ideal which must lie at the bottom of all true freedom; an ideal, let us confess, which still soars almost as high above our party strifes and political tumults as it did above the clash of Roman swords and the shouts of the amphitheatre?

As a corollary to these ideas of the integrity and worth of human nature, and of God as a Father infinitely wise and loving, comes the thought that religion is a true life, rather than a profession or a performance. God is served most nobly by obedience to the eternal law, in accordance with which souls grow into their own perfect likeness and stature. Justice and mercy are finer than oblations and sacrifices. Forgiveness is diviner than fasting. The loudest assertion of loyalty pales

before an act of practical obedience to the eternal law. A strong, true, tender character, perfect in its way, after its kind and according to its nature and ability, as the Heavenly Father is perfect in His infinite and glorious way, is the pearl without price, the everlasting treasure.

This was the "Gospel of the kingdom" which Jesus preached; this "good news" of God's infinite presence, and eternal and tender providence; of man's worth and dignity; of the substantial integrity and soundness of the nature which God has given him, needing only to be perfected to make him a worthy child of the Heavenly Father; and of religion as no longer a thing of penances and fastings and sacrifices, of groans and sighs and fears, but as an obedient, trustful life, pure in thought, loving in temper, helpful in act toward all mankind. This was the gospel which was uttered, not perhaps without some stammerings, some incomplete and fragmentary sentences, but with sufficient divine clearness so that it did not lose itself, so that it took root and grew in Galilee. And this was so grand a gospel that the world, with all its professings and its worshipings, has never compassed it, has never risen to its level or grasped its full meaning; so grand a gospel that to this day no one has amended any of its essential principles, has pointed out a truer path of human welfare, or has foreshadowed the coming of a diviner kingdom of God.

It would be hardly possible that in the enunciation of these principles there should be no error of detail, that the application of all the practical precepts originally drawn therefrom should be wholly desirable. However clear the insight of the prophet his thought when applied in practice must be clothed in the garment of its time. But unfavorable conditions or lack of worldly wisdom in practical affairs, does not invalidate a principle. The principle remains true, and will abundantly justify itself when it finds an atmosphere of thought and life

favorable to its development and illustration. Special precepts of universal alms-giving, or of absolute, passive non-resistance, may not be in accordance with the broadest thought concerning human relations, but the principle of reciprocity, of doing "to others as ye would that they should do also unto you," will hold true while the world stands.

Whatever we may think about devils and Gehennas, whatever we may think about miracles and Messiahships, whatever we may think about bodily ascensions and spectacular second comings, thorough investigation seems to confirm the faith that a grand message was somehow delivered in Galilee; a message which brought God into close contact with human life and lifted man into his true position as a child of the Infinite and an heir of Eternity, with a nature worthy his parentage and destiny—a message so divinely sweet that mankind still trembles to receive it, fears to accept the "good news" which it brings, as the inspiring, everlasting gospel of the coming kingdom of truth and righteousness.

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